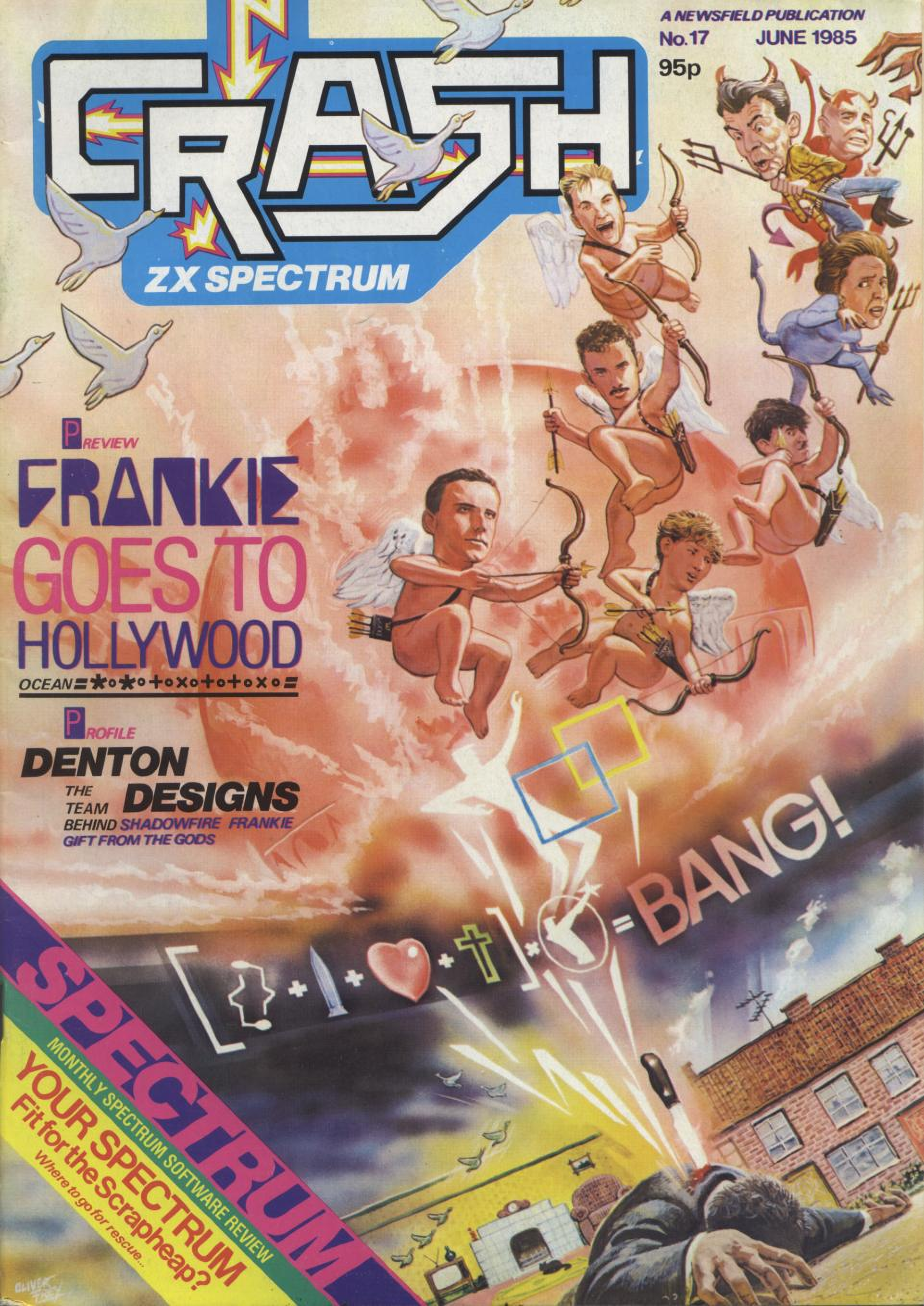
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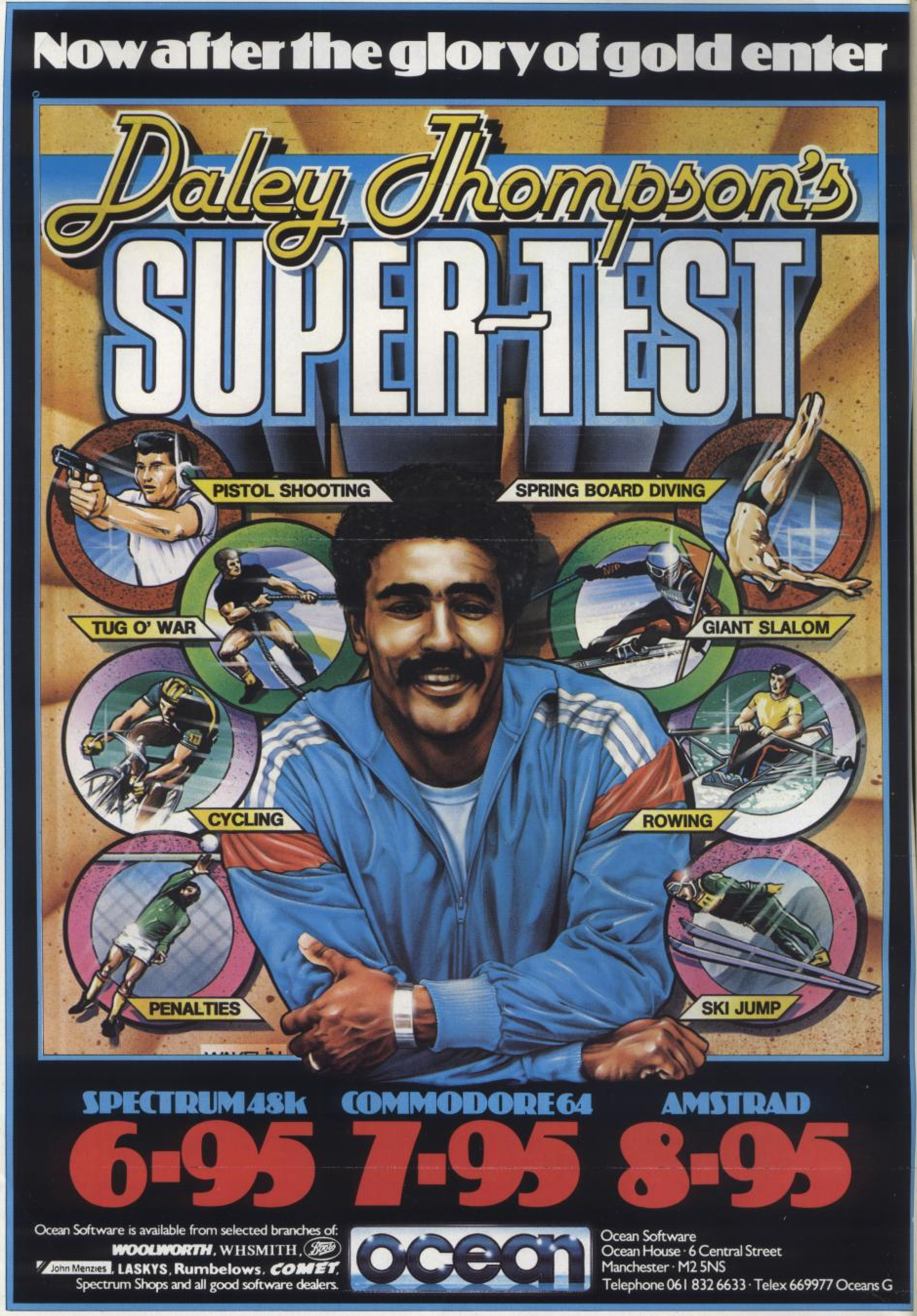
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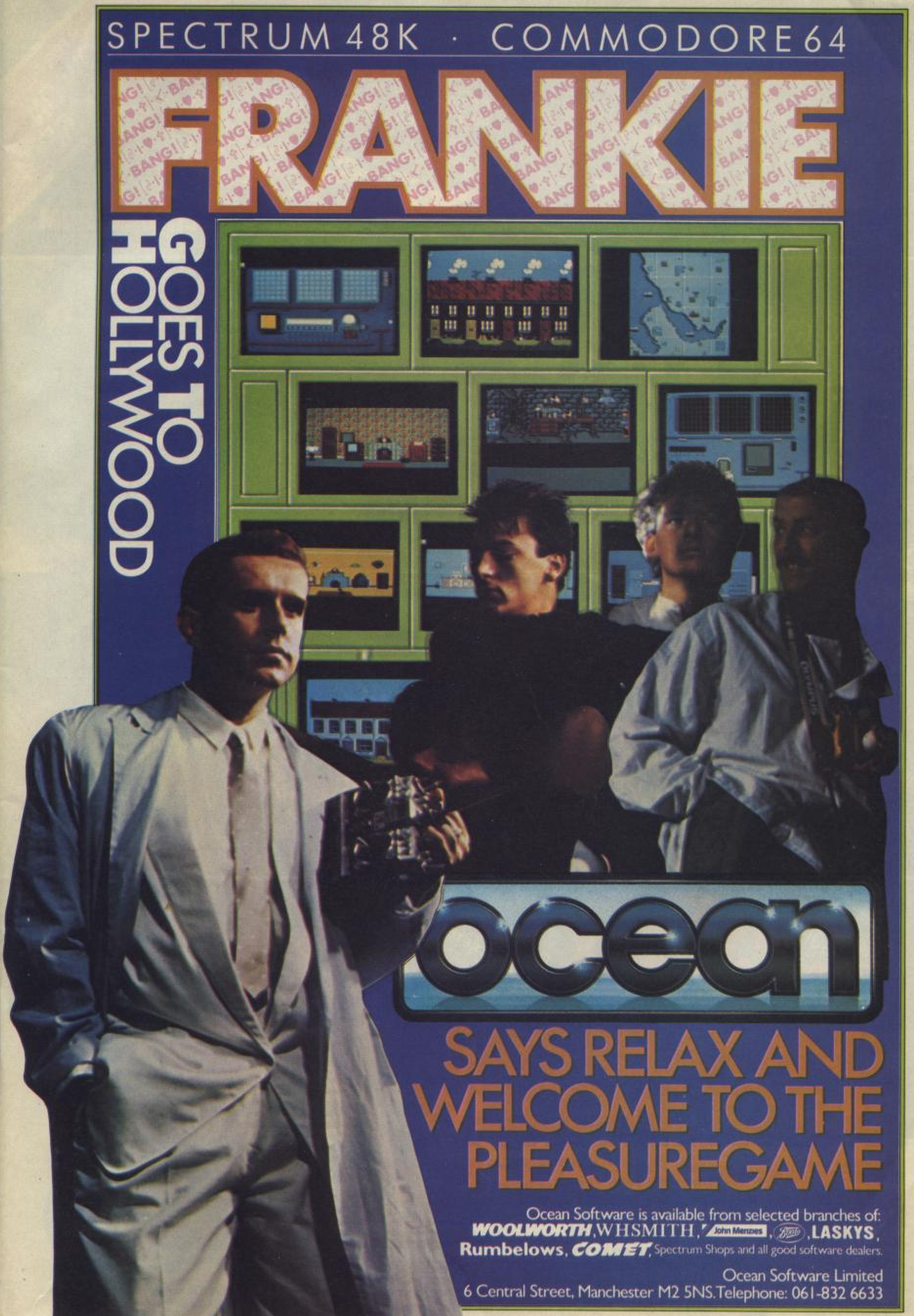


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DENTON DESIGNS
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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No. 17 JUNE 1985

Contents

The Aaaaahh Spot



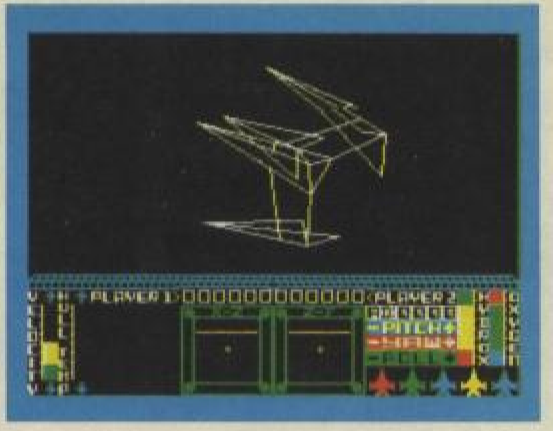
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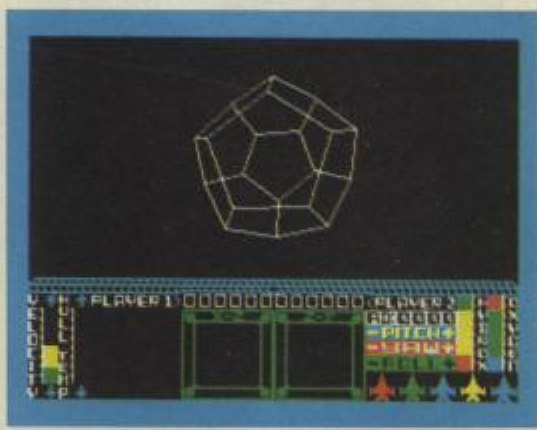
Regulars

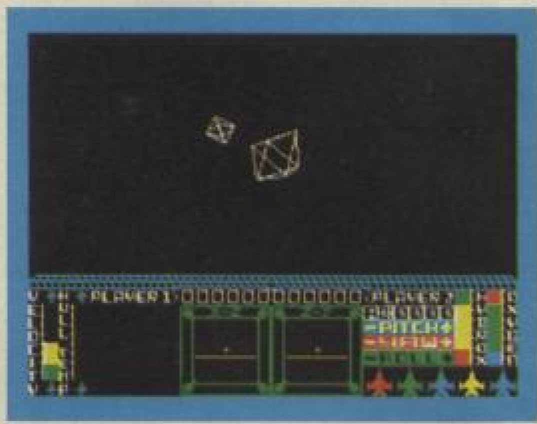
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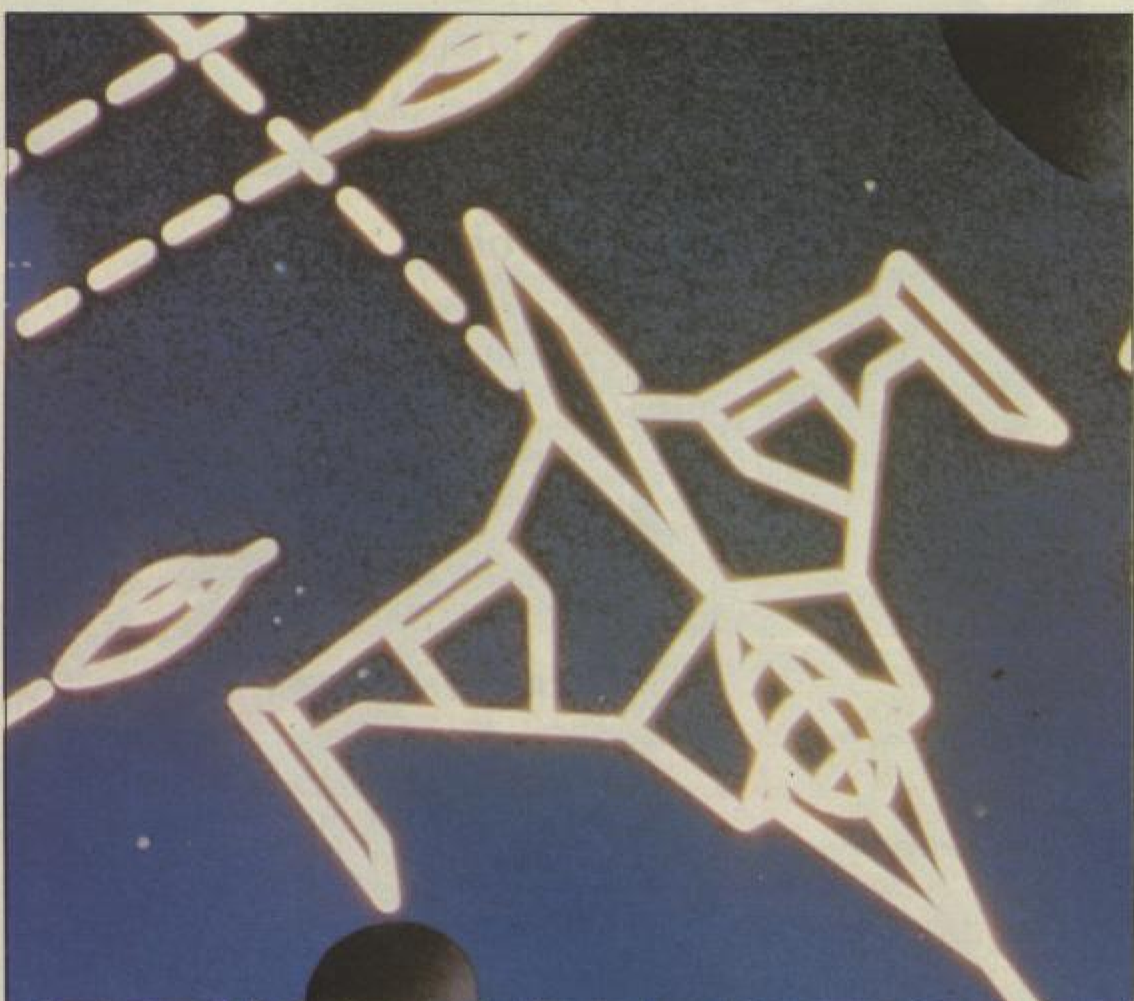




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HELLO POT, THIS IS KETTLE

I've done jobs within one or other of the various media for most of my working life; I was a television film editor at some point before a twist of fate inexplicably turned me into the editor of a computer journal, and so, as Han Solo would say, I've been around, seen it all. There's a trite phrase about not believing everything you read in newspapers, so because of my background I'm among the privileged who know you should not believe everything you see or hear on television either. Recently, the press and television have had a field day with Sir Clive Sinclair's uneven fortunes, and whatever sensible arguments they put forward, the lack of knowledgable speculation, the accumulation of corrupted data and missed points undermines the basis of those arguments and turns the Sinclair coverage into a typical British Genius-bashing event. If you are going to pillory somebody, it's wise to have a good aim. I don't expect the *Sunday Times Business Section* to comment blandly on the £ millions of unsold Spectrum computer stock in shops without having the acumen to look into the reasons for instance. The *Sunday Times* didn't bother to mention that by lowering the price of the Spectrum+ to that of the heavily stocked ordinary Spectrum, Sinclair effectively left retailers holding thousands of computers they could no longer sell. Quite naturally, many turned round and refused to order the Spectrum+ until their existing stocks had sold — result: stagnation. It's not the only reason for Sinclair's current problems of course, but you would expect a 'venerable' paper to have dug that simple fact out. Of course, even in the business press, it's much more fun to simply argue that the arrogant whizz kid has at long last overstepped the mark and, as in any good Graeco-British tragedy, is getting his deserved come-uppance.

The *Sunday Times* also and article on Sir Clive, and in the intro suggested that it's a pity the really important aspects of Sinclair should have to be funded by the 'less imaginative' like the Spectrum computer. You might expect to see this sort of garbage written by a compuluddite (check Lloyd Mangram's long word dictionary), and therefore it's upsetting to see that it is co-written by Jane Bird, who should know more and better after her stint on the editorial staff of one of the biggest computer magazines.

However, by comparison, Bryan Appleyard, writing in *The Times* (April 9th), verges on the psychotic in *From jargon yawn to techno porn — a romp through the micro mags.* The article is written with an almost Swiftian self-disgust of his own body, which seems out of context with the subject matter until you read lines like, *'Finally, down in the world of Mega Demos, self-disgust is born. The hideous ads, the ghastly, breathless prose, the do-it-yourself programming with its relentless militarism — this is the dead-end world of techno porn.'* He's talking about computer specific magazines — *'This dedicating of a magazine to a single product is bizarre in the extreme.'* Really Bryan? Perhaps you were so turned on by the sexual self-loathing the reading of (it would seem to be) *Your Spectrum* aroused that you failed to notice that the computer is only one of hundreds of products single-user magazines are concerned about. Not only is Appleyard's piece confused and pointless, but it's very tone turns it into the sort of techno porn he's attacking — a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Turning to television, the picture doesn't really improve much. TV has simply failed to come to terms with the home computer and seems positively annoyed that the biggest aspect is games playing. Consequently, much of the very little air time is given to the 'proper' (ie serious) use of computers, and when it comes to doing something lively (ie games) a lack of knowledge, interest and competence takes over splendidly. Thames TV has a computer games slot at some point. I know because one of their researchers rang us to ask whether we could supply some names of 13 year-olds to 'test' a new game. The game was *World Series Baseball* by Ocean/Imagine. When I said I knew of the game (it was unreleased at the time), she seemed surprised and then asked me if I knew anything about this Ocean, were they a reputable firm? My turn to be surprised — I should have thought a TV researcher would know the answers to such obvious questions like that, after all, it would only take a few days of reading techno porn to absorb a little of the jargon yawn. How can you be good at putting something across on the little screen if you know absolutely nothing useful about it?

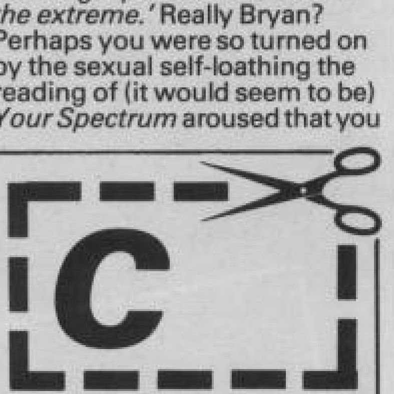
The trouble with TV is lack of time (unless you're a snooker fan), everything must be done at a rush and it absorbs, partially digests and regurgitates information with the brain barely engaged. This may explain TV AM's new computers with breakfast programme (reviewed by John Minson and Graeme Kidd in News Input this issue) but it doesn't explain how television generally steamrollers our lives away with sheer

DO-IT-YOURSELF CLIVE SINCLAIR KIT

Another first from CRASH!!

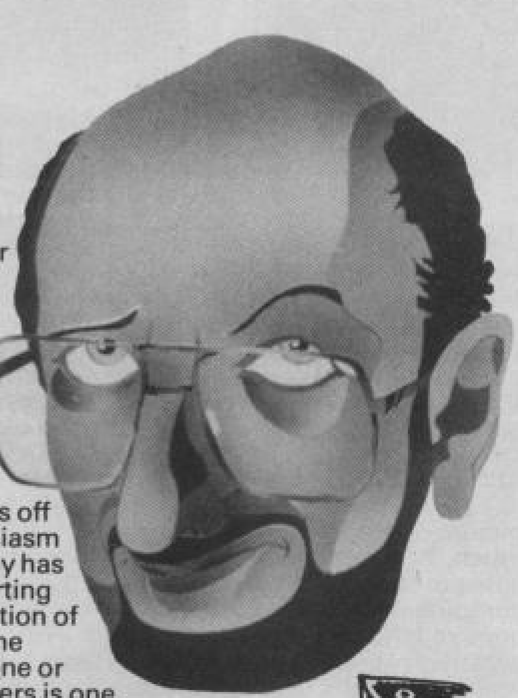
Did you spot the mistake in the Sir Clive article last issue? 'live Sinclair' were the opening words. Well, David the Demon Designer hadn't been at the gin bottle.

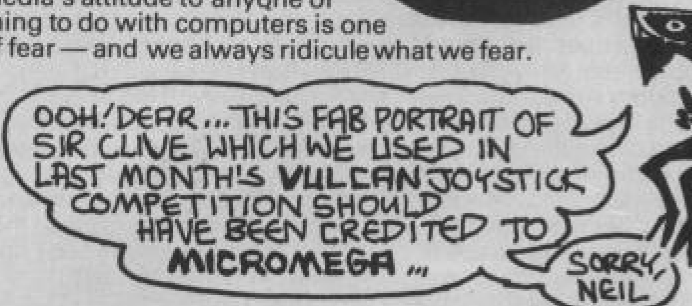
No, the Big C fell off the layout boards somewhere on the journey to the camera. Honest. So here's your very own cut-out-and-keep repair kit.



incompetence and misinformation.

And nothing, beyond media- envy or sheer human small-mindedness, explains why TV and press prefer to knock instead of support. The more entrepeneurial you are, the more mistakes you are likely to make — and Sir Clive has made his share, there are good reasons to carp; but writing so much success off with journalistic enthusiasm for chasing the fox at bay has nothing to do with reporting facts (supposedly a function of the media). Generally, the media's attitude to anyone or thing to do with computers is one of fear — and we always ridicule what we fear.





ADVERTISERS' INDEX

PROGRAMS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

MERELY MANG

The Spectrum sports simulation range will soon be having another addition — Boxing. **Elite**'s next release, slated for July, is a simulation based on the European heavyweight challenger **Frank Bruno**. Elite say that techniques in the design of the game have been supervised by Frank Bruno and his manager Terry Lawless. Frank hasn't done too badly, winning 25 out of 26 contests since he turned professional, and now says Elite, their new boxing game will give boys and girls the chance to learn something of the stamina and courage of competitors in such sport.

Elite's other, current, tie-in *911TS* (reviewed in this issue) does the same for Dunlop tyres, and I must say, I was impressed with the courage and stamina these round black things with holes in the middle have to have to stay on the road. It's a pity that *911TS* looks graphically so similar to the last release, *Grand National*. I was never much for the gee gees despite the persistence of Jeremy Spencer, the software editor, who hurtles the county lanes in his 1942 Morgan from Point to Point meetings. (For those of you who don't know what Point to Point is, it's a gathering of the landed gentry in a series of marquees serving alcoholic beverages somewhere near a local race course. The idea is to totter drunkenly from marquee to bookies before each race and make money by betting on the races, but as the horses have to leap fences that make the Grand National look tame, it is, frankly, a mugs' game). While I'm on the unlikely subject of horses, Jeremy gave birth to a foal last week. It can barely stand on four legs and already they're teaching it to jump fences. The CRASH bigwigs went to a local Point to Point last weekend when two of Jeremy's horses were riding. They won six pounds (big deal). The reason for rambling on like this is so I can include (by request) the picture taken of Roger (Beechers Brook) Kean in the Winners' Enclosure. This was taken just before the grooms led him away for a rub down, a roll in the grass and gave him his oats. Life isn't all computer games in Silicon Chip Hill you know. To cap it all, Jeremy's stable has named the new foal OLI, after our erstwhile art editor Oliver Frey. Let's hope that unlike his namesake, the foal will be able to jump the fences rather than sit on them.





ABOVE: Oli the artist with Brackets Kean

BELOW: Oli the foal

GRAMMERE ... MMERELY



Back to business . . . .

The big release this month seems to be **Beyond**'s *Shadowfire*, the first adventure without text, which uses icons to control the game. It's been developed by Denton Designs, the talented bunch of ex-Imagine programmers who get a look in later on in the issue. Graeme (Infernal Memo) Kidd and Roger (have tape must travel) Kean visited Dentons for a preview of *Frankie Goes to Hollywood — the Game*. You can hear all about that later on as well. Good news for *Shadowfire* fans is that Dentons are working on *Shadowfire 2* which Beyond will release around Christmas. The sequel follows the fortunes of the Enigma team — or misfortunes — for according to current thinking, Enigma's ship suffers a mishap and crashes into Syylk's planet. In the accident three of the team will be killed off and the captured Zoff escapes. Syylk's tribe are warring against another, so much of the game involves the remaining team members in a life or death struggle to help Syylk's people, while trying to recapture Zoff at the same time.

Shadowfire 2 will also be icon-based, but the big change will be that you will have animated graphics of the characters in what is currently the view screen so their actions will be both visible and controllable. 'They won't be large character graphics like in *Gift from the Gods* or, say, *Tir Na Nog*,' says Steve Cain, 'these will be sprite-sized, probably 3 characters high on the Spectrum version, but having them small means a lot more animation, and I hope you will be able to see them doing their functions and actually fighting. The menu side will also be more flexible, instead of listing objects in menu screens to be picked up or manipulated, objects will actually appear in the locations for use so you can activate them immediately.'

I'm told that there 'will be more game' in the follow up — Denton's consider a good player should complete *Shadowfire* in about two hours, maybe less, so the second one is going to be more involved and lean more to arcade/adventure than strategy.

Beyond are also releasing *Shadowfire Tuner* shortly, and editor which enables you to alter the strength of characters and redetermine weapons location and effectiveness (like a Dungeon Master, you'll be able to say that a grenade contained in a location is actually a dud, for instance). This should also help to map out the ship.

Beyond's plans for the rest of this year include the release of *Spy versus Spy* (just missed this issue), a new adventure called *Elindar*, which apparently was written by two students who walked in off the street with the game. It features scrolling 'landscaping' in a world as large as *Lords of Midnight*, artificial intelligence. You can direct characters to do things for you and arrange to meet them later for a report. Then of course there is the third in the Midnight trilogy, *Eye of the Moon* by Mike Singleton, which he's hoping to finish sometime in June ready for an early Christmas release. With bated breath, we wait to see whether the land of Midnight will be turned into a giant multistorey carpark.

But that isn't everything, for Beyond are launching a new software house called **Monolith**. The object is to keep Beyond as an adventure/strategy house, and put all the arcade oriented games into Monolith. First release is *Boulder Dash 2*, followed by Mike Singleton's *Quake* (only for the CBM64 sadly). Around Christmas we should see another new game from Denton Designs/Monolith, tentatively called *Sport of the Future*. Programmer Steve Cain, who calls it *Bouncers*, says, 'The idea came up because good action sports games do well. We want to have the fastest possible arcade sport game with very large animated figures and we'll be going full out on the animated graphics as the background is just a black box. The idea is to bounce a ball through a hole in the ceiling. After loading the game you will be able to load the characters you want to play with, each character, maybe up to eight of them, is ethnically different, so a black kid in Toxteth, say, can let his feelings come through. The player will have to put himself 1000 years into the future and then look back 500, so it's a sort of future historical reconstruction. The thing is it'll be fast and need a lot of joystick skill, an incredibly violent game with a touch of *Roller Ball*, like gladiators in the arena, and it'll have 'spectacle'. It will look very simple on screen but the graphics of the competitors will be very complex.'

Need I say more?

Mikro-Gen's new release (24th May) will be a merciful release for software editors, because Mikro-Gen will presumably stop flooding us with those modern babies nappies that keep all the wet in (they haven't admitted to this peculiar postal fetish yet). The game is of course, *Herbert's Dummy Run* (£9.95). Herbert, the one you kept tripping over in *Everyone's a Wally*, has grown into a toddler now. Wilma and Wally have lost him in a large department store and are waiting for his return in the Lost and Found office. Your job is to help Herbert get there — against all the odds. Another slip up here — *Sinclair User* magazine ran a review in their last issue. What happened Mikro-Gen, I'm getting the feeling we were left out.

Anyway — the famous words — review next month.

If you enjoyed the CRASH Readers Award for the Best Platform Game *Wanted: Monty Mole*, then hitch your pants for a rough ride, because original programmer **Pete Harrap** has produced the real follow up, *Monty on the Run*. I'm not going to say too much about it here because we'll be running a full preview in next month's issue, together with a profile on the men behind **Gremlin Graphics**, but I can tell you that this is one



Herbert trolling through the dangers of a department store.

MEREL ERELY

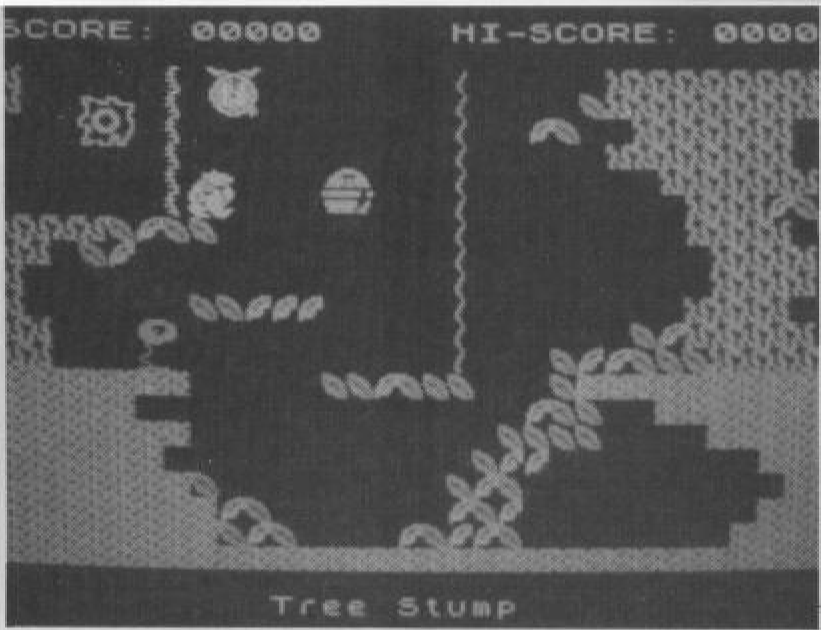
mean game. As you can see from the screen shots here, the graphic style is very similar to *Monty Mole*, and it is a platform game, but some of the features will make your hair stand on end and it's not beyond the possibility that Pete Harrap will be certified and put away! The game will be available in October. Story next month.

Gremlin's other and earlier releases kick off with *Beaver Bob in Dam Trouble* by **Christian Urquhart** (loading screen designed by CRASH winner PJ Seymour). This is a multi-screen game with some platform elements, but most of the action takes place under water as you try to save your dams from being eaten by crocodiles. We'll be reviewing that next month.

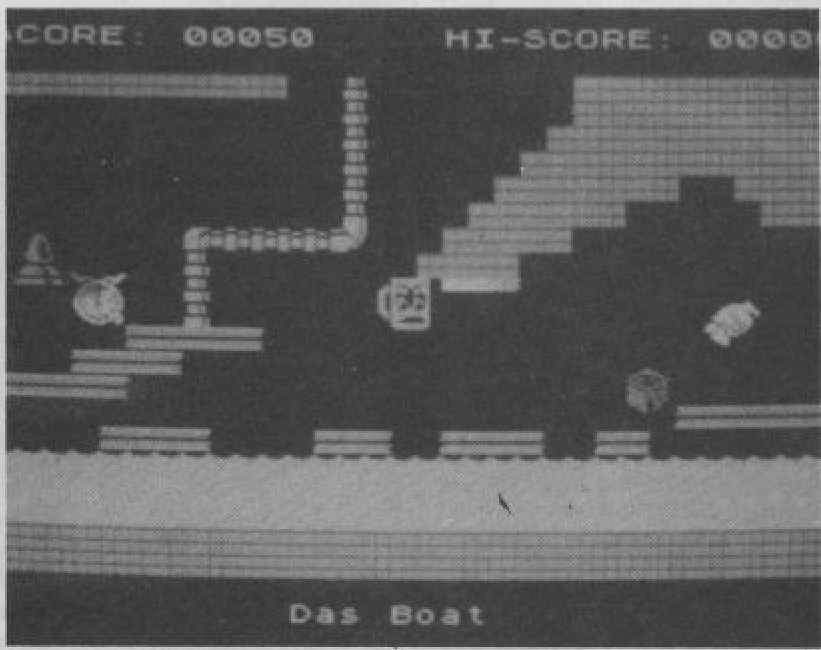
Also due soon is *Grumpy Gumphrey — Super Sleuth*, and I can't tell you too much about that either because *C&VG* magazine have en exclusive on the review (we slipped up somewhere)! It's programmed by **Shaun Hollingworth** and is set in a department store where you play the store detective. There's a thief about, nicking things, and your job is to aprehend him. Picking on the wrong person will lead to one of three letters of warning. But Gumphrey's tasks also include rounding up escaped animals from the pet shop, finding lost babies, getting hungry ducks out of the food department, fixing the lift, putting out fires and much more. While he's doing these things, any announcement about a thief must take priority. The store has many departments on four floors linked by a lift. Masked character graphics, loads of animation and a tremendous sense of humour make *Super Sleuth* look set to chart. Once again, more next month.

Another Gremlin release is being written by **Chris Kerry**, who has moved some distance away from his heavily coloured graphics of games like *Jack and the Beanstalk* with another humourous offering called *Metabolis*. A nasty race of aliens have turned humans into things, but you were the failure, a bird with the brain of a man. The object is to fly around and find the ingredients needed to turn you back into a man. These are to be found in a very large maze full of horrors. There are a lot of neat touches that help to make this game quite original — as we shall see, next month!

Finally, on the Gremlin front, there's *Tinderbox*, an adventure based on the famous children's story. Gremlin Graphics have written this as part of the Computer Trade Weekly Ethiopia Appeal, and all profits from the game will be donated to the appeal. Costs have been kept to a minimum by free contributions from almost everyone involved. The game costs £4.95 and we should see a review from Derek next month (I'm beginning to wonder what's happening this month)!



A new Monty, fit from his training in the prison gym, actually somersaults around the screen.

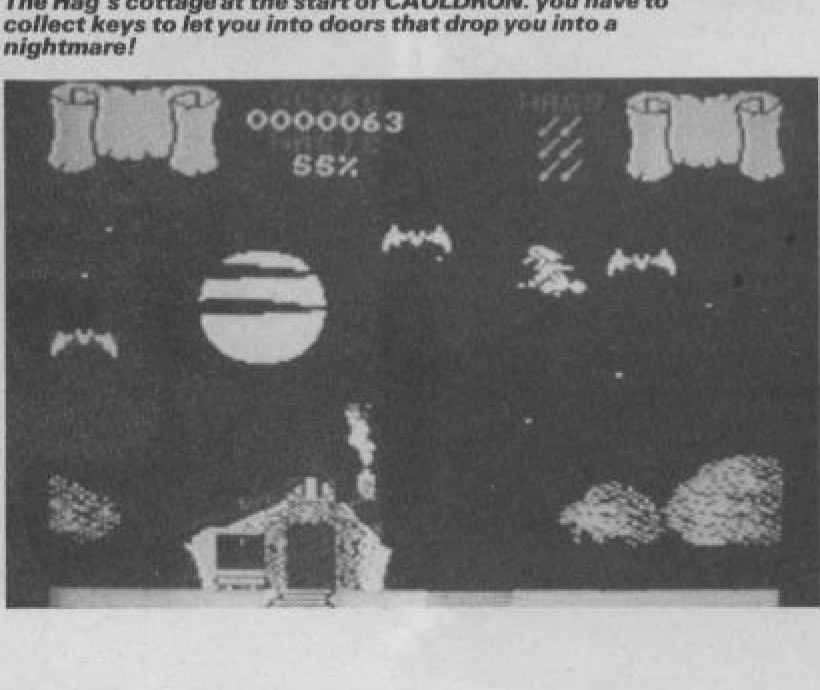


I've been looking out for the Spectrum version of *Cauldron* by **Palace Software**, having enjoyed it on the 64 (well I do dabble now and again). Unfortunately it's been delayed. According to **Pete Stone** of Palace it's such a big, colourful game that the Spectrum version got a bit left behind and they had to release the 64 version due to the demand for it. Anyway, it's on its way, should be out any a day. I hope it's as maddening as the 64 version!

Firebird have just released more titles in their budget 'Silver Range'. Some of them are new, but the two I'm dealing with here will be familiar to CRASH readers. *Short's Fuse* may be remembered under its original title of *Bombscare* by **Dollarsoft**. This was reviewed in issue 11 (December, page 150). As far as I can see the front end's been tidied up a spot and some of the screens have been slightly altered in their backgrounds. The storyline has been slightly turned around. In the original you guided Boris the bomb disposal expert around the various platform screens defusing the bombs against a time limit. Now you're Sam Short and your opponent who was Cyril Saboteur has inexplicably become — Boris!

At the time the reviewers were generally agreed that the game was very difficult, quite a good platform game with above average graphics (nicely drawn backgrounds too). Keyboard play was responsive but finicky, although life has been improved with user definable playing keys in this new version. Assuming that the Overall Rating has increased because of better Value For Money (£2.50 instead of £5.95) and improved Use of Computer, *Short's Fuse* would now get an Overall of 69%.

The Hag's cottage at the start of CAULDRON. you have to collect keys to let you into doors that drop you into a nightmare!



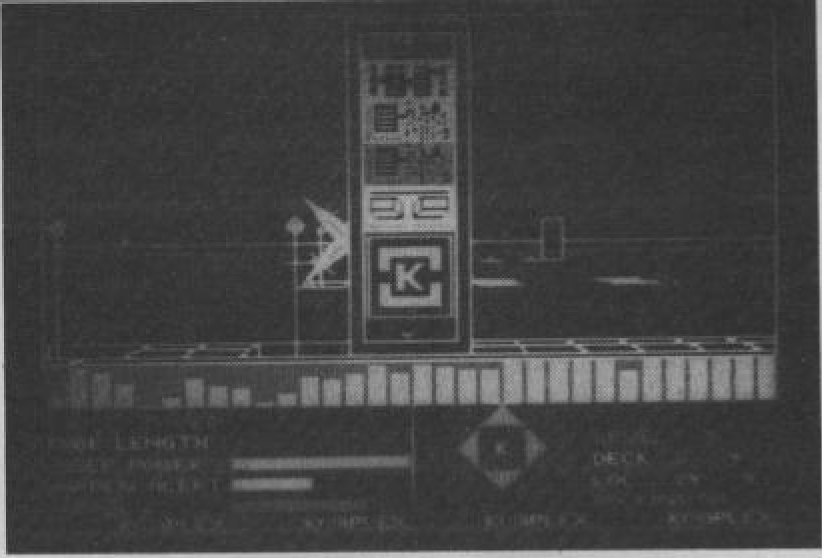
The second title is *Farenheit 3000*, originally released under this name by Softstone at £5.95. A Jet Set Willy clone of 64 platform screens, *Farenheit 3000* sends you into the core of an out of control nuclear reactor. You must reach all 64 valves and operate them before the critical temperature of the name is reached. The reviewers (Issue 13, February page 60) felt that although the graphics were not up to those of *JSW*, the game itself proved harder, and as a jumping skill exercise, more involved. The Overall Rating at the time was 81% (Addictive Qualities rated at 79%), so taking into account the better Value For Money, Firebird's *Farenheit 3000* comes off pretty well with a new Overall rating of 87%, and is a pretty good play if you like platform games.

The Shropshire software community has just expanded with the addition of **Aasvoguelle Productions** and a game called *Mount Challenge*. Based in nearby Church Stretton, **Bill Percy** set the company up with money from the Enterprise Scheme operated by the Manpower Services Commission. This allows someone out of work to earn £40 a week as long as they can put up £1000 towards the setting up costs, which makes Aasvoguelle Productions the first Government backed software house. Bill brought the game in for a quick sneak. It's a platform jumping game with a rather unusual feature in as much as the hero, Professor Burk, can jump either more space or less depending on whether the player has keyed in 'energy on' or 'off'. The result is a hard and interestingly frustrating game of timing skill. We'll be looking at that more fully (guess) — next month. Also, hopefully, we'll get hold of *Beatlequest*, £9.95, a Quilled adventure based around the lyrics of the Beatles' songs. This is due out at the end of May.

Well, I'd better go and unhitch my horse and ride off into the sunset for another month, dodging the Ludlow tourists in their C5 convoys (see last month), avoiding Matthew Uffindell's discomobile (feel the sound before you hear it) and zapping the monthly Candy grumble about his coloured pic (see last month). You see, life is just like an arcade game!

KOMPLEX

Producer: Legend
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**



Docking with a letter rack — the K of KOMPLEX.

It seems that the trouble began when some dotty scientists realised that the object hurtling into our galaxy was not a bit of space debris, but, was in fact a very complex, alien artifact. The machine is out of the range of our probes, so how can the scientists discover all there is to learn from the master race that built this express blob? You guessed it, they are going to send you up there to put the brakes on. Some smart Alec in a white coat has worked out that if access can be gained to the the central control computer and the correct sequence of codes be placed in it the ship will grind to a halt. Well that's the theory, it's up to you to try it out in practice.

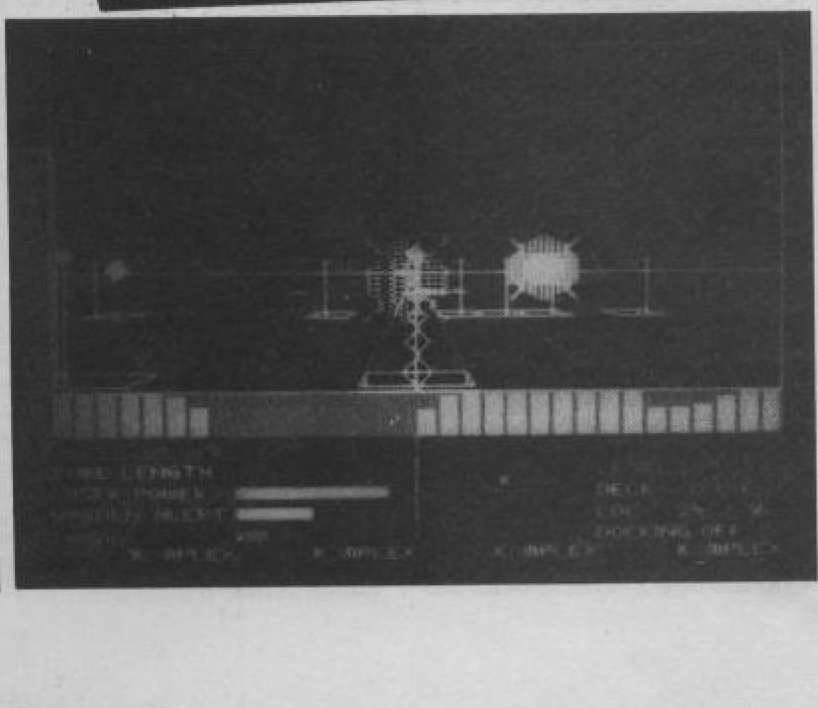
You start on the deck called called 'CCC' this is on level 4 deck 4/4, roughly in the middle of the ship. The layout of the ship is constant, it has 7 decks but the number of 'rooms' varies according to the deck. Decks 1 and 7 have only one room, decks 2 and 6 have 9 rooms (3X3), decks 3 and 5 have 25 rooms (5X5) while deck 4 has a matrix of 7X7 giving 49 rooms. A simple map of the ship would be diamond shaped. Each of the decks and rooms are interconnected by service tubes.

The player is presented with a 3D, vector graphic, view of the space ship internals. The focus of the game, the 'CCC', has seven empty racks and inside each is a letter and an empty space. In the start up game the letters are K,O,M,P,L,E and X, the task is to find the seven letters and place them in the empty space within the corresponding racks. The missing letters will be found scattered about the ship inside the many other racks the vast majority of which contain nothing but circuits, so it's going to take you a long time especially if you don't make a map as you progress.

To help you your ship is equipped with a target indicator which points in the direction of the rack containing a target letter. Once you have found the rack and docked with it you will be able to transfer the letter to your own ship, then it's back to the CCC to place the letter into the correct rack. Repeat this process with the remaining six letters and the Alien will have been re-programmed

The scientists on Earth will not have explained the ships automatic defence system, possibly because they thought that you might not go, but we know what a brave bunch CRASH readers are. The first element of the defence system is the surface lasers, long poles protruding from the floor, firing as your ship passes and damaging shields. The second element is mobile droids called Monitors and Wardens which seek you out and fire on you, again damaging shields. When you move along a service tube you will be fired upon by the third defence mechanism. Your own laser will not work within the confines of the tube so all you can do is minimise damage by deflecting the attacks with an external shield. Shield strength is indicated by an array of short bars under the playing area. With each hit they will shorten and eventually vanish. Shield strength can be improved by destroying the droids with the laser provided you and allowing their debris to settle.

Shooting up one of the Monitors in KOMPLEX; only a medium level Warden alert, but it's hotting up.



The degree of hassle you get from the mobile attackers depends on the ships awareness of your presence, if you scamper about the place bumping into walls, tubes and over motion detectors the ship will alert more of its defence against you. The player knows how aware of him the ship is by the number of 'warden alert points' he has accumulated, these, together with the damage to your shield, can be cleared by changing decks.

Apart from the target location device your ship has an accurate navigation log to help keep track of your location, and luckily you don't have to travel along a tube to find out where it leads because in a fit of inexplicable cooperation the ship will tell you the destination of a tube when you dock with it.

Accompanying this game is the free Editor which allows customisation of the alien ship — you can turn off the various defences for instance. It has been included to aid in making maps which in turn speed up the process of playing the game. Another feature of the Editor is that it will generate entirely new maps to extend play. Each new map name will invoke a map, different in every respect except for the number of rooms and levels, which will remain constant. It is important to remember that the map generator does not generate random maps, if two machines each had a map named 'CRASH85' then those maps will be identical. Since each map is generated by a combination of any seven letters the *Komplex* Editor is capable of creating a total of — well — lots and lots of different maps.

CRITICISM

● 'After the failiure of *The Great Space Race* Legend have rapidly produced *Komplex*. On playing I was totally confused, but as time went by things became clearer. Although confused I had fun shooting wardens etc. After learning how to play, the game's awesome task was before me. I

managed a 'K' and now I just need the rest. This game, with pretty decent 3D graphics really grows on you in time. All in all a much much better offering than the last.'

● 'Komplex *is a very attractive looking game, with nicely moving 3D objects drifting about the screen. The detailed ground rises and falls as you move towards it very well. It looks like a very professionally written program, but oddly enough, as soon as you move the screen moves jerkily left and right, although this isn't as noticable if moving forwards or backwards. It's a little bit disturbing. I like the idea of the regenerating shields which enables you to progress through enemy territory for some considerable time, and the docking idea is really good, especially as you float down hexagonally-shaped tunnels, where the sense of forward movement is created by waves of colour coming towards you. However, I began to lose interest after a while — perhaps it could do with more fast action, although the strategy side of it is quite good, and it's a little over-priced for what you get.'*

● 'I am really having a great deal of difficulty making my mind up about this game. The effect created by the graphics are superb and the interior of the space ship is truly alien and eerie. The pure arcade player may not find satisfaction in the shooting action, nor will his adrenalin pulse around his system as he tries to avoid death because dying is not easy. The real purpose of the game is to explore and eventually re-program the ship's central computer. After playing the game for an hour there is little chance of your being surprised by the objects and scenery that will be found on a new deck. As a pure mapping game *Komplex* is a winner because of the number of non-random maps that can be created, all of them graphically excellent. An astute player will soon learn that the more care he takes in moving about the ship the less agravation he will get from the defence system, others may simply ignore the attackers on the grounds that there is little chance of being killed anyway.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: all definable to suit player
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor type, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: mostly black and white but effective where used
Graphics: very effective
Sound: very little
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
Screens: 119 locations for each map name
General rating: an unusual 3D game more involved with mapping than fighting.

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	78%
Playability	62%
Getting started	51%
Addictive qualities	64%
Value for money	65%
Overall	**72%**

CHUCKIE EGG 2

Producer: A & F Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.90**
Language: **machine code**

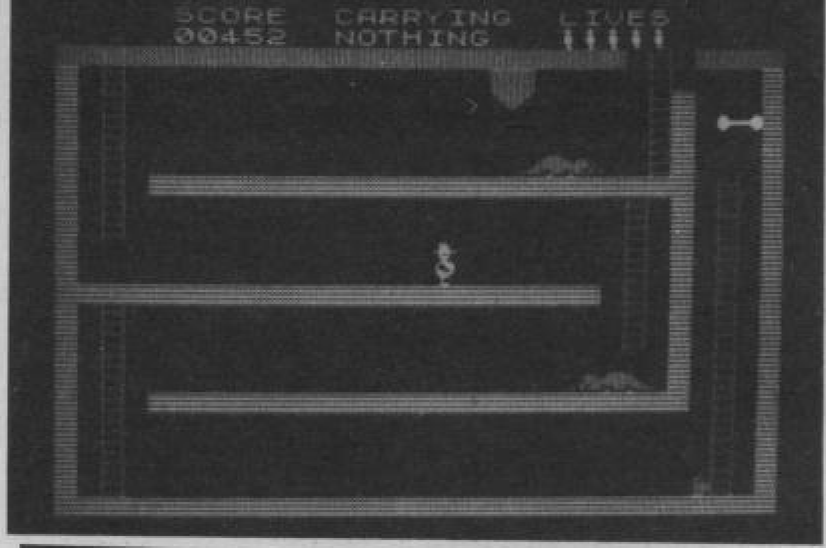
Our hero, Hen House Harry, has had a hail for help from the owner of the local chocolate egg factory, the automated production line has ground to a halt. The special consignment has to be completed and Harry, the fool, has volunteered to complete the final batch of eggs.

All Harry has to do is to put together a few eggs. Each egg has three ingredients, cocoa, milk and sugar but due to rather sloppy stock-keeping the ingredients are scattered around the factory, this is particularly annoying when you realise that each egg needs eight amounts of each ingredient, did the storekeeper put them all in the same place? Of course not. As you locate all of the ingredients you will have to take care that each ingredient goes into the correct vat, otherwise the end product may emerge less than gracefully. Harry's life is made even more hectic by the company's policy of putting toy kits inside each egg because each toy has eight pieces which must be found and placed into the toy maker.

None of this is exactly easy, and there are the inevitable monsters hanging around that make life tougher still. Once an egg is completed Harry must take it to the despatch department and start on the next, but each egg becomes harder to finish because while Harry has been so busy all the little monsters have been breeding.

Chuckie Egg is an arcade/adventure in the sense that various obstacles and problems bar the way, and the solutions are to be found within the game. This may involve collecting an object and taking it elsewhere or simply finding and operating a switch. Objects carried are indicated at the top of the screen, just to jog your memory.

The game differs quite a lot from *Chuckie Egg* — although



The intro screen to CHUCKIE EGG 2, Harry on his way down to collect the bone.

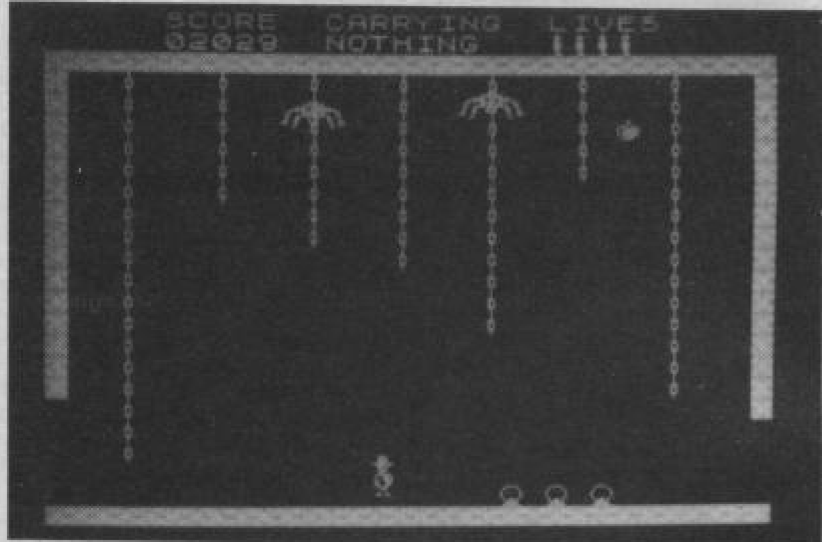
the action still takes place on platforms, there are 120 interlinked screens, each with their own character and monsters. A hi-score facility is provided along with a game load and save. As well as being able to save a partially completed game the player can also save the score board, this feature has been included so that the *Chuckie Egg 2* competition entrants can send in their scores, and be believed!

CRITICISM

● 'As a follow on from the mega-popular *Chuckie Egg 1*, which has consistently ridden high in the CRASH hotline charts *Chuckie Egg 2* promises hours of fun and is a worthy successor. A & F have come up with a very jolly arcade action adventurette with cheerful graphics and an amusing theme. While I haven't yet managed to master the game and penetrate deep into the factory complex, I have been assisted in my attempts by the save screen option. Canny players entering a new screen with a handful of lives in reserve can save their position to tape and explore the perils that lie before them safe in the knowledge that snuffing it needn't mean slogging their way back up from the start screen.'

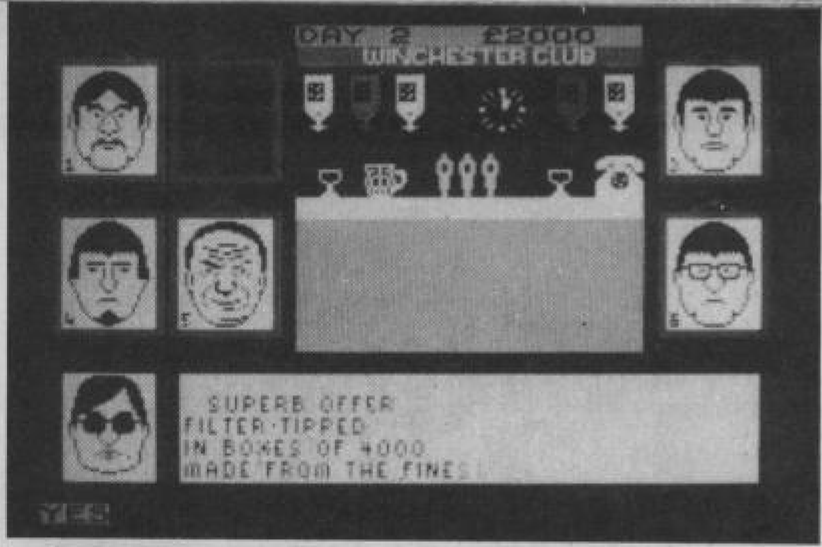
● *'The original* Chuckie Egg *a game still popular with many, is now rather old. It's successor,* Chuckie Egg 2, *is more of an arcade adventure than the original and boasts 120 different screens, I only managed to see a handful of them. Those screens that I did see impressed me, some were compressed into passages while others contained ropes or ramps, these variations gave the game that 'I wonder what's next' appeal. I would have found the game very tedious had it not been for the game save facility, the idea of having to face those moles again!. A worthy successor indeed.'*

● '*Chuckie Egg 2* is quite a departure from *Chuckie Egg* (the first). The graphics are still essentially the same but with a few additions and many Jet Set Willy style features. All are very nicely animated, some being small, others being quite large. I must say that I love the way the hand crawls about — a very realistic hand it is. The game itself is playable although the main nig-



The first chocolate factory screen where Harry must jump from chain to chain to get past the floor rings.

gle is that you are forced to repeat the two start screens on each new game which are not part of the main game, and this becomes boringly repetetive. On the other hand the SAVE facility helps overcome this problem. But in the main game everything is playable and interesting and when you go into the next screen you never quite know what to expect. This game will become addictive to the Jet Set brigade who will want to know their way round the chocolate factory, but overall I didn't find it very addictive, but not bad either. A nice progression.'



A selection of tasty characters spend their day at the Winchester swapping drinks, jokes and goods.



MINDER

Producer: DK'Tronics
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Don Priestley**

For many of you the all too brief appearance of Terry and Arthur once a week is simply not enough, perhaps DK'Tronics has the solution, now you can idle away the time waiting for the next programme playing this program. *Minder* is a trading game played in true Arthur Daley style, if you feel sure that you can double deal, short change and generally put one over your fellow humans then you should have few problems. As with any trading game the object is to buy and sell goods to make a profit. Of course the goods dealt with in *Minder* tend to register on the upper band of the temperature scale.

At the start of the game you have two thousand notes and a variety of goods, these will vary every time you start a game but 5 home computers at £47 (they must have been Commodore 16's) and 10 bags of mushroom compost at 6 quid a bag would be typical. You can take stock by selecting 'I' for inventory and you will also be reminded of any goods that you should deliver or collect. To sell goods you'll need some victims and *Minder* offers a choice of locations where they may be found, the prime one being the Winchester club. Travelling from one location to the next is simplicity itself, selecting 'G' offers a sub-menu with a choice of locations. You can go to your home, the 'lock-up', Terry's flat, the Winchester club or any one of eight dealers. Arriving at a location, you will be confronted with a set of windows. If they are empty then no-one's in, otherwise there will be pictures of the various characters present. To talk to a character, simply enter appropriate the frame number.

On entering the Winchester any hesitation in selecting a person to talk to will result in one of the many rogues attempting to force dubious merchandise on you. These people can be a real pain but you might be missing a good deal and being rude will only cause a scene. The picture of the person you are talking to appears alongside the input/output area and since each character always identifies himself the player soon learns the useful contacts and the not so.

The Winchester club is a less than ideal sales patch as the characters prefer drinking to doing business. When you want to unload some goods it is far better to pay a visit to one of the dealers at their own premises — but there your problems begin. The dealers spend most of their time away from their places of business, so you can decide to wait or try another dealer. To play the game well you will have to and learn the various characters' lifestyles so you will know where to go when you want them.

The work really begins with selling. This is hard work! You can begin the banter with phrases such as 'ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ...' or 'I'VE GOT SOME ...' The next stage is to fix the price — you want the highest price, he wants the lowest — with luck you may agree in the middle. You will find yourself bickering in the same way over the quantity of the order but after an agreement has been reached your customer will confirm the agreement and give you date by which he wants them delivered. You can sell goods that you haven't got but if you fail to deliver them on time the buyer will be more difficult in the future. Delivering goods is a major part of the game, and having clinched the deal Terry will have to be found and asked to deliver them — it helps to remember the customer's name so Terry knows where to go. After the delivery Terry deducts his cut and hands the balance over — when you have found him again!

The Daley slog, then, consists of trips to and from dealers, chasing Terry and trying to find the best deals. The game lasts for 15 days (not real-time) and time-wasting must be avoided whenever possible. The game introduces a lot of complications, the most important being good old Sgt. Chisholme, a man constantly on the prowl. Dealers won't discuss business with him around and should he find his way to your 'lock-up' then you could end up with some gear confiscated and wasted time in jail. Terry's role is not as important as in the series, although he does act as your minder. Unlike the TV series Terry does rather well, dictating fees which you just have to pay. The accepted vocabulary helps re-create the series' atmosphere with phrases like 'I'M ASKING A PONY' (a request for £25 rather than an attempt to converse with an equine quadruped). It's important to remember that the characters have memories, they will not forget you if you mess them about. Time is against you — it's lost waiting for dealers, an hour goes on each journey, conversations also cost an hour, and just to make matters worse 'Her indoors' will not allow you to stay up later than 3pm so there's no chance of doing a 24hr stint to conclude a deal. The final score for the game is the amount of 'folding' that you hold, and on the fifteenth day

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: almost any via UDK
Keyboard play: very responsive indeed
Use of colour: fairly basic but attractive
Graphics: nice but a few attribute problems
Sound: strange
Skill levels: one
Lives: five
Screens: 120
Special features: SAVE facility allows you to get around the 'back to the start' problem
General rating: a must for the complete gamer.

Use of computer:	**80%**
Graphics	**80%**
Playability	**78%**
Getting started	**75%**
Addictive qualities	**83%**
Value for money	**81%**
Overall	**81%**

unsold stock will not count as part of your profit, so get rid of it!

CRITICISM

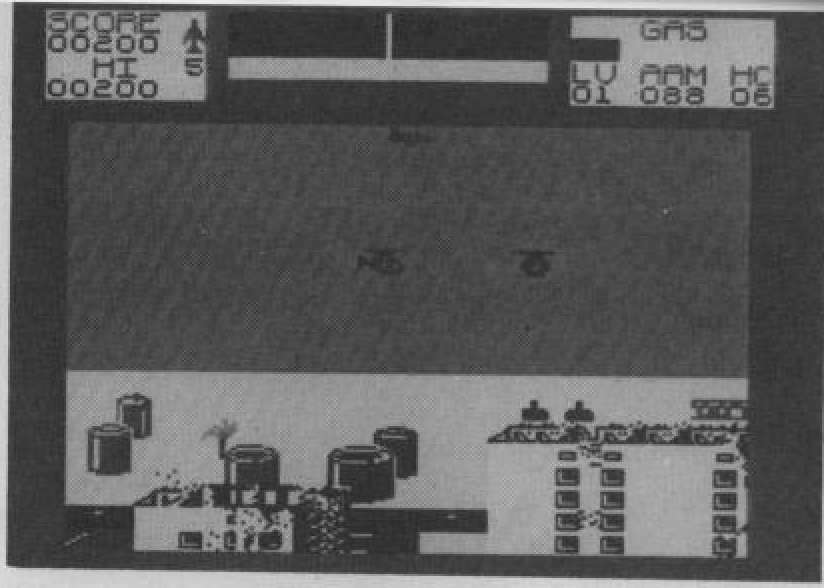
● *'Minder* is a sort of trading simulation game not unlike the TV series. The game follows the same buying and selling routine with dodgy faces and skirmishes with the 'old bill'. A point that I would like to make is that if the game existed without the TV tie in it would not really rank as anything special. Don't accuse me of being anti-TV variant as I'm great fan of 'Minder' and I think the game is a very good idea. It really could have been expanded upon to make it more interesting and variable but it's still amusing and challenging and it improves with play. All right my son!'

● *'I am a great fan of the TV series so I expected a great deal from this program. In some respects I was disappointed. I found it difficult to get on with. Finding characters is time consuming and annoying. At times I felt that I had little control over my role in the affair. Deals are very hard — upsetting the characters resulting in discussions being peremptorily concluded. Nor could I try and bluff a dealer; often both parties' prices would be very close but attempting to call the deal off in the hope that he would go for a slightly higher price rather than not at all, more often than not would result in the dealer saying, 'SHAME . . . ' and trotting off. The police presence is rather heavy. Chisholme must be able to mind read because on the days he was about he was at every dealers' premises before I even arrived. One other point is that you cannot treat Terry as shabbily as the real Arthur does. To play, I find Minder as annoying as it is intriguing. On the plus side while the dealing may be fiddly it is also a lot of fun especially when you have learned where to find people and how to talk the language. The characters' presentation works well and throughout the game you can identify people by spotting their face in a window, rather like spotting a friend at a party. There is a great deal to this game, a lot must be learnt about the 'Manor' and the characters within if you are to have a hope of making a crust. 'Hey guv. a tenner's a bit steep ain't it?'*

COMMENTS

Control keys: respond to prompts
Joystick: N/A
Keyboard play: input a bit slow
Use of colour: not a great deal needed
Graphics: characters recognisable
Sound: good Minder tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
Screens: many different locations
General rating: an interesting and absorbing game

Use of computer:	**75%**
Graphics	**60%**
Playability	**60%**
Getting started	**65%**
Addictive qualities	**75%**
Value for money	**60%**
Overall	**75%**



FALCON PATROL 2

Producer: Virgin Games
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Steve Lee**

Falcon Patrol 2 is the latest of the Virgin Converts, originally written for the CMB64 this straightforward arcade game now finds itself within the clutches of the world's real game players.

Your side is losing the desert war 3-1 and now the enemy have managed to build up a large chopper force that gives them air superiority, but numbers don't count when they have to go up against the Falcon piloted by none other than........... (please insert your name). In all there are 16 waves of enemy helicopters to destroy. The lethal quality of the enemy aircraft depends on their colour; Black Transports, Blue Gunships and Red Solos. The former spend most of their time flying about the desert dropping flak batteries and thingies to jam your radar, invariably they are protected by at least one gunship which, while it can shoot, doesn't go out of its way to chase you. The red solo choppers are really nasty, they are very manoeuverable and will cause you a great heartache. Your aircraft carries 100 AAM missiles, these can be either air-to-air or air-to-ground, it all rather depends on your attitude when you fire them. If you are very clever you will be able to shoot down enemy aircraft with the ground-to-air missiles, this method is to be preferred to facing the foe head on.

Scattered about the terrain there are landing pads. Should you run low on fuel or ammunition during a mission, a safe, undamaged pad is the only place your plane be re-armed and re-fueled. The main display shows your little aircraft in the centre against a scrolling desert view seeded with dead trucks, aircraft buildings and fuel dumps. In fact the only objects that escape the decimation are the pyramids, at least the tourist trade should survive the war. At the top left of the screen the current score is shown above the high score together with the number of lives remaining. On the other side a bar chart keeps track of your 'gas' and shows the number of aircraft remaining in the current attack wave, while another instrument tells you how much ammunition you have left. In the upper screen area a simple radar display keeps track of on-coming enemy aircraft, however, don't really on it too much because the enemy can render it useless by dropping jamming devices.

CRITICISM

● 'When all the shooting is over and I have climbed out from under my wrecked plane for the umpteenth time, I can truly say that *Falcon Patrol* is awful. The graphics are, well, OK, pleasant but definitely not wow. I was particularly bored by the enemy, the greatest danger they ever posed was a collision with one of them; but did a great mid air explosion take place? Not a bit, the aircraft trundled off happily while my machine descended gracefully to the ground, as if to land, and then promptly disappeared in a puff of smoke and flame. In fact the one thing that really annoyed me was the way my plane seemed to be able to survive anything except landing. If — in the unlikely event of my being shot at — my plane was hit it only registered the fact by cruising calmly earthward and then blowing up. As I could only hit planes that were actually on the screen, so making the radar rather useless, there was great difficulty in using the air-to-air missiles because I would nearly always have to fly near the ensuing explosion caused by a hit, this in turn would cause my plane to go through its long and boring death sequence. Sorry Virgin this might have kept Commodoreans happy but it's not working on the Spectrum.'

● 'Falcon Patrol 2 *was one of my favourite games on the CBM 64 but the Spectrum version is a big disappointment, I found it totally unplayable and monotonous, after a few goes even the sound started getting up my nose. It does have fairly pleasing scrolling graphics together with a nice opening tune but I really can't give it any more praise. All in all I found it both boring and un-compelling, it lacked challenge.'*

● *'Falcon Patrol* is not dissimilar in style to Defender types. The layout and style are similar but the scenario is different. While I can't call the graphics 3D as the producers claim, this shoot 'em up is just that — a pure shoot the baddie, nothing more, nothing less. A lot has been done with the graphics to reproduce things like buildings, oil drums and palm trees. It looks quite nice too and scrolls quickly. The forward scanning radar is quite useful in following the action of the enemy. Where this game falls down is in the area of content. It's all very well having helicopters chasing after you and having to blow up oil drums (is that what you do with them?), but it does seem to lose something after a short while and you get fed up with the simple action. In fact I got quite cheesed off after half an hour and was pleased to see the back of it. I think this sums the game up.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, M to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: traditional layout
Use of colour: good
Graphics: nice but oh so boring
Sound: generally poor
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 5
Screens: scrolling display
General rating: fair but very dated

Use of computer	**52%**
Graphics	**61%**
Playability	**52%**
Getting started	**66%**
Addictive qualities	**44%**
Value for money	**52%**
Overall	**56%**


BEYOND
CHALLENGING SOFTWARE
THE FIRST ADVENTURE GAME WITHOUT TEXT!
YOU ISSUE
COMMANDS THROUGH
JOYSTICK
KEYBOARD
OR LIGHT PEN
AMBASSADOR KRYXIX IS HELD CAPTIVE
ABOARD GENERAL ZOFF'S STARSHIP
YOU HAVE SIX FUTURE HEROES AND
100 MINUTES OF REAL TIME TO RESCUE HIM
GASP AT THE RELENTLESS PACE
THRILL
TO THE
GRAPHICS
BE INSPIRED
BY THE
MUSIC ON THE
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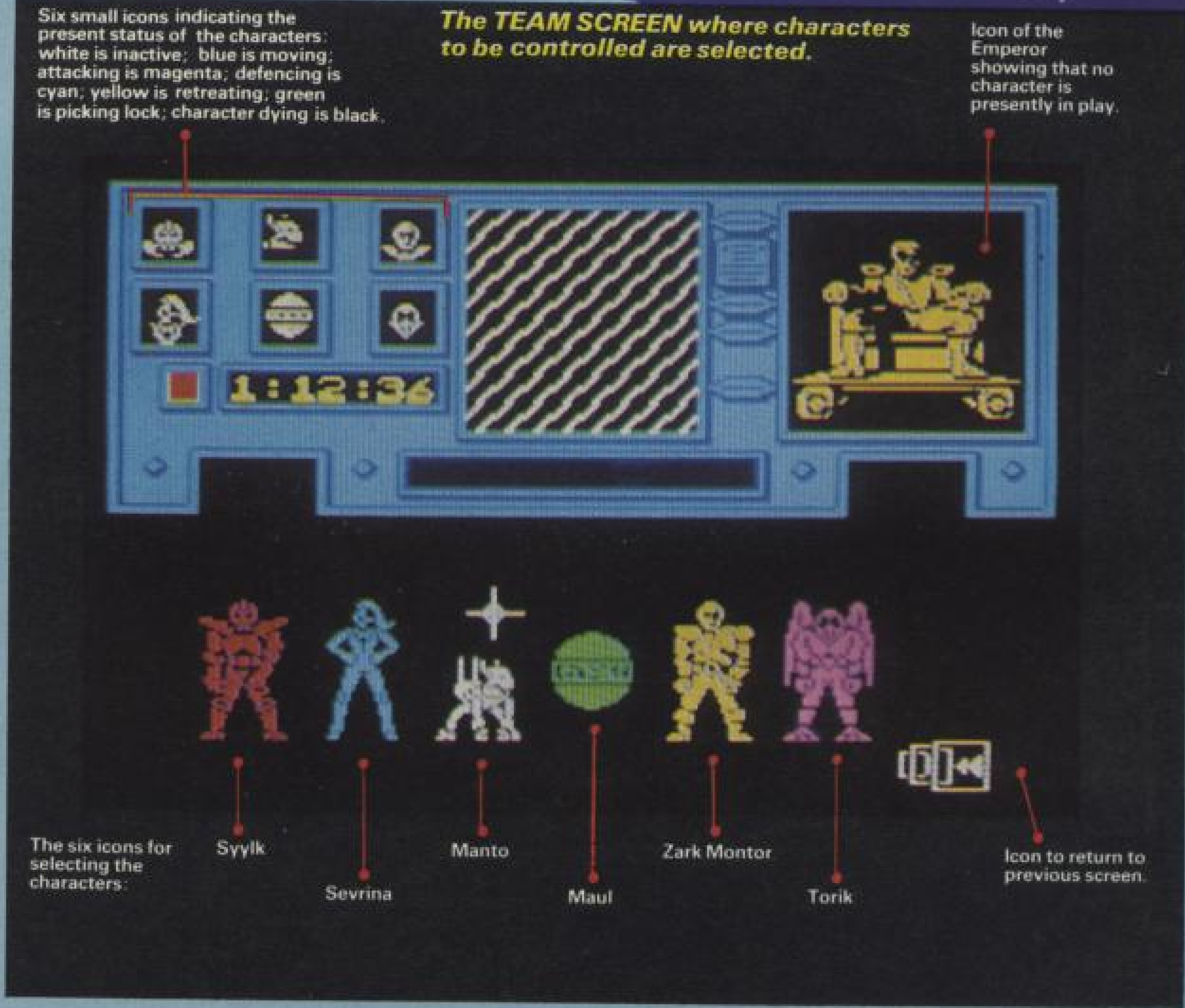
S • H • A • D • O • W •

SHADOW FIRE

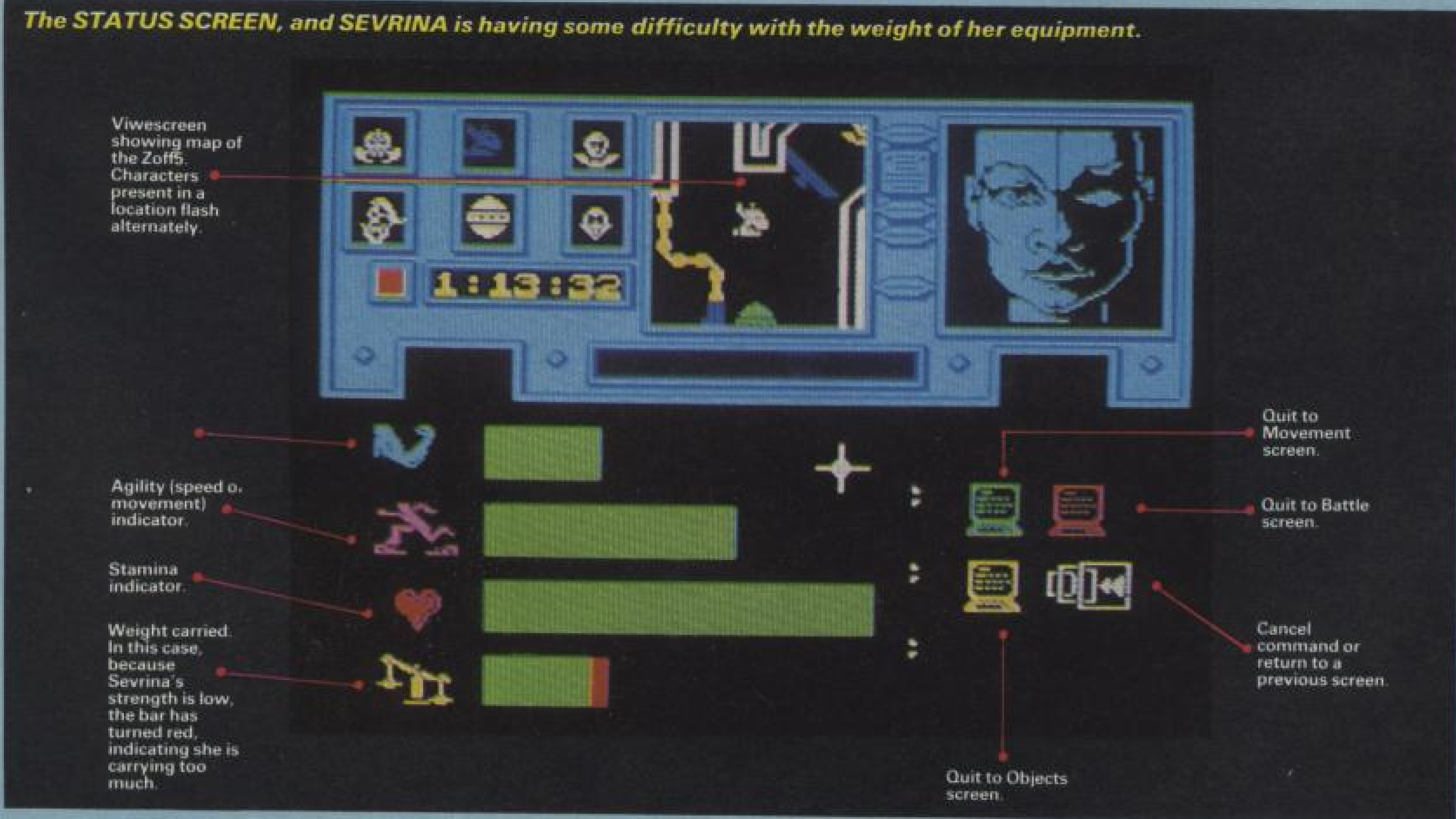
Producer: Beyond
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Denton Designs**

The distinction between adventure and arcade has definitely taken a battering recently, and *Shadowfire* is going to worsen the situation! Denton Designs have here devised and designed an entirely novel game which uses icons instead of text and thus brings the adventure right into the arcade player's lap.

Shadowfire is a new kind of starship capable of jumping from planet to planet orbit, and is therefore a rather powerful weapon. The plans for this new ship are on a microdisc embedded in the spine of Ambassador Kryxix who, sadly, has been captured by General Zoff, a traitor to the Empire, and is held captive on Zoff's ship, the Zoff5. It is only a matter of time (100 minutes in fact) before Zoff's interrogation team discover the plans for Shadowfire which will put Zoff in a position to rule the Empire.



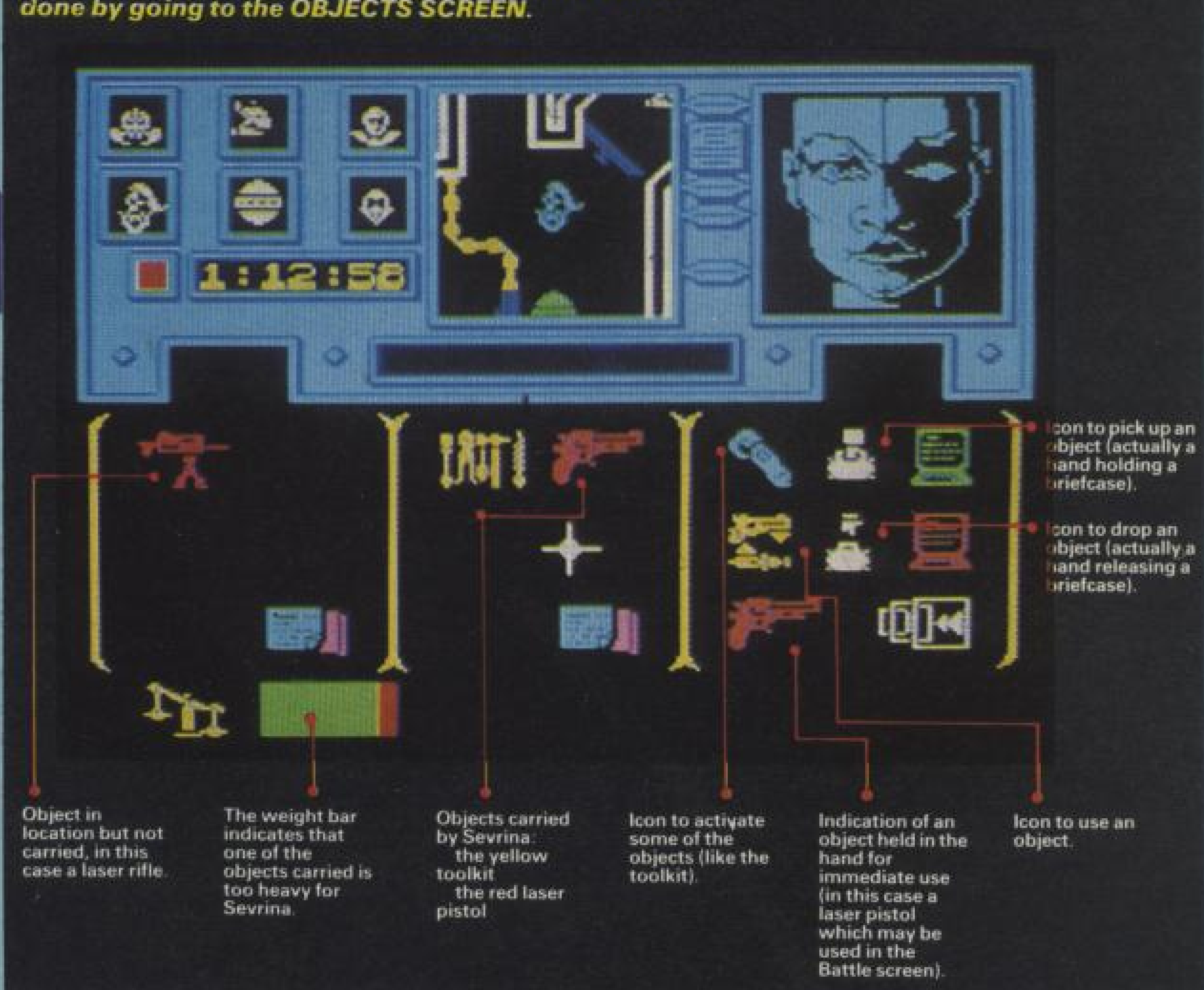
The TEAM SCREEN where characters to be controlled are selected.



The STATUS SCREEN, and SEVRINA is having some difficulty with the weight of her equipment.

F • I • R • E

Checking out what is too heavy for SEVRINA can be done by going to the OBJECTS SCREEN.



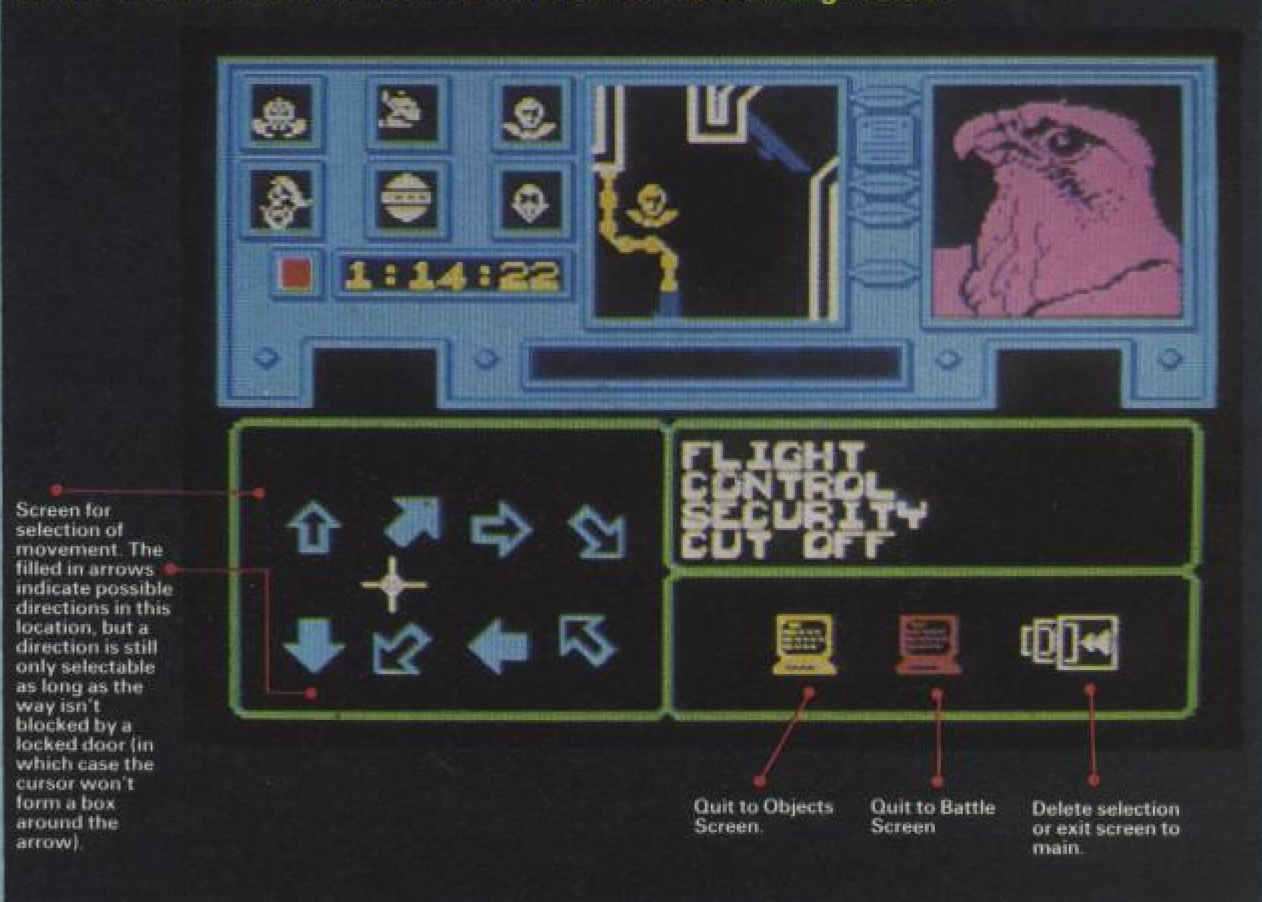
Enigma is an organisation dedicated to the Emperor's service, a mix of heroes, criminal scum and cybernetic engineering. They are the only people who have a chance of getting on board Zoff's ship, rescuing Ambassador Kryxix, capturing Zoff and either taking or destroying the Zoff5. The game is played against the clock in real-time with you controlling the Enigma Team.

There are six members in the team. The leader, **Zark Montor** is a human, **Syylk** is an insectoid, a ruthless fighter who has a pathological hatred for Zoff (a weakness perhaps?), **Sevrina Maris** is a female human with a criminal record and a specialist in picking locks — she tends to be loyal only to herself (a problem), **Torik** is a bird-like creature, a gun runner and freebooter — good with explosives and due to his flying abilities, the fastest mover and a good scout, **Maul** is a weapons droid designed to carry many different weapons systems, slow moving but well protected, and finally there is **Manto**, a transport droid with very little self protection capability.

Shadowfire has strong elements of strategy because handling the characters well depends very much on utilising their best strengths at the right time and minimising the effects of any weaknesses they may exhibit. Strategy also comes into the way the characters are moved about the Zoff5 once they are on board, using Torik as a scout, but remembering that he is vulnerable to attack, using Sevrina to get through locked doors and Zark or Syylk where tough action is demanded.

The screen display is complicated — a better idea of the interrelation may be got from looking at the various screen pictures on these pages than from the written word. Basically there are five main screens, each broken up into sections. The Team screen displays a graphic of the six characters and it is here that a character to control is selected. The Status Screen displays the attributes of the selected character, with icons indicating agility (movement possible), strength, stamina and weight carried. Green bars indicate the amount of attribute. The Objects Screen allows manipulation of weapons and equipment; there are three subscreens which show objects in the same location as the selected character, a middle screen shows objects carried, and one on the right contains the icons by which the objects may be manipulated. The Movement Screen also has three subscreens, the largest contains arrows for the eight directions with filled-in arrows representing possible directions for that location. The middle screen informs you of the character's present location, and the right contains icons for changing screen. The Battle Screen's three subscreens show characters in the same location including friend and foe, an eight-directional compass in the middle and at the right a series of activating icons which allow

The MOVEMENT SCREEN with birdman TORIK on his scouting travels.



attack with a selected weapon. The three attack icons command a character to do battle and if successful advance into the enemy's location; stand fast and do battle; or retire to a safer location. Some weapons are useful when used within the same location, while others may be fired into an adjacent location — all of which calls into question the strategical role of the weapons used, forcing the player to ensure that characters are suitably armed or near a supply of interchangeable weapons.

The entire game may be joystick driven. The cursor is placed over an action icon like 'pick up' or 'drop' which is activated using the fire button, then moved to the object icon desired. All the various main screens are accompanied by a top set of three screens, the left showing the status of all six characters (see screen picture captions), the centre showing a map of the selected location, and the right showing a large picture of the selected character. An information 'printout' panel displays text which is of use to the player. On each screen a set of coloured monitors allow movement between the various screens (see pictures).

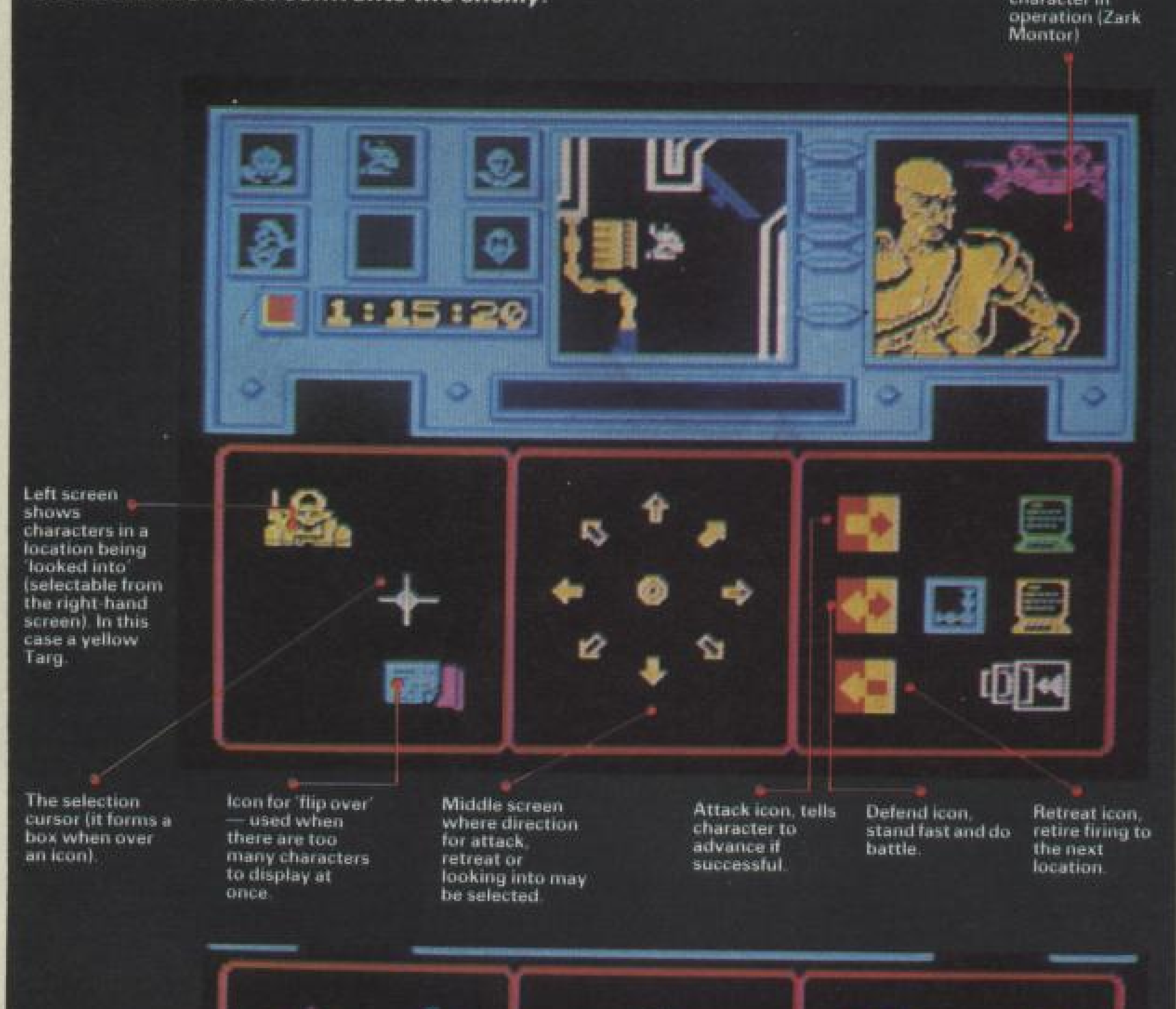
CRITICISM

● *'Shadowfire* is a very difficult game to describe or put into any category, perhaps the best thing to say is that it's brilliant. At first the icons seem a bit daunting but after some practice they are really simple to use. The graphics are good especially those in the character screen (incidently the graphics on the Spectrum are much clearer than those of the CBM 64). The game is quite tough to play and will take some time before it is totally mastered. What makes it extra special is the fact that each character has its own peculiar abilities so making each one play an important role in the success of your mission. Strategy, as in *Lord of Midnight*, is important in *Shadowfire*. It is best just to play a few games to familiarise yourself with the general surroundings of the ship before you seriously contemplate completing the game. Looking at the CBM 64 version and the Spectrum version I would say that the Spectrum version is superior having clearer graphics (not mucked up by too much colour like the CBM) and it is a harder game to play. Overall *Shadowfire* is an excellent game which will appeal to almost anyone, especially people who liked *Lords of Midnight* or *Alien*.

● *'Having six characters to control is good, because in a way it gives you six lives, yet you have to treat them as a team to succeed at all. On the other hand it also means having to take care of all six, which can be a bit involving at times, and has you dashing between characters with the joystick. There is a lot of on-screen information — very good — and the graphics are superb. Shadowfire is a complex game which will take some time to play right through, especially as it takes a while to get the hang of the icons and how to use them quickly, but I think it will have a wide appeal.'*

● 'When I start on a game like this, I like to know that there is a strongly worked out background, because involvement with the characters and their aims seems important. Just reading the accompanying colour instruction book is enough to let the player know that details are all worked out, present and correct. Indeed, as the game progresses (or games!), you begin to know the characters under your control quite well, each with an independent attitude to the tasks in hand. This takes *Shadowfire* well into the realms of strategy and role-playing. In looks, this game is simply stunning. The fluency of the graphics and the way the screens 'iris in' and 'iris out' is slick and effective. Special mention must be made of the character screens, which are wonderful, detailing each person or thing in great detail. Icon control may be new to computer games, but as a control method it must surely be here to stay, and its use, plus the game design, the characterisation, the skills required and the extraordinary graphics all add up to *Shadowfire* being state of the art without doubt.'

The BATTLE SCREEN; some minutes into the game and ZARK MONTOR confronts the enemy.



COMMENTS

Control keys: up/down 2nd row/3rd row, left/right alternate bottom row, fire, any key top row
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type, Fuller
Keyboard play: simple and very responsive
Use of colour: brilliant
Graphics: stunning
Sound: a bit limited
Screens: an endless supply
Special features: Icon driven — and the Spectrum and CBM64 versions come on one cassette
General rating: a state of the art game of the 'modern' sort (ie hard to define exactly), and an absolute must for any serious (or not so serious) Spectrum owner. Highly recommended.

Use of computer	95%
Graphics	94%
Playability	92%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	89%
Overall	**96%**



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T·A·P·P·E·R



TAPPER

Producer: US Gold
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Ocean in association with Ian Morrison & David Anderson**

If you've ever wondered whether you would make a good barman, now's your chance to find out with unbreakable glasses (well almost unbreakable). *Tapper* puts you in charge of several different types of bar, all filled with thirsty and rather over-demonstrative customers. The general object is to serve them drinks of soda Western style (ie slide the glasses along the length of the bar) and collect the glasses which they sling back at you. This sounds kinda easy, pardner, but it ain't.

Each location contains four bars, and on the wall opposite the end of each is a soda dispenser. The customers come in through doors at the other end of each bar and proceed to waltz towards your barman. Should a customer get to the end of the bar before being served, the barman gets chucked out by being slid the length of the bar. Serving a customer means taking the barman to the appropriate soda dispenser and pressing fire. Pressing fire a second time sends the glass sailing along the bartop. Customers thus served retire to drink and may leave, or hang on for a refill. Once emptied, the glasses are slid back along the bartop towards the barman who must collect them before they fall right off the end (and end a life)! It's important, however, in your enthusiasm, that you only send the required number of drinks along any bar, because extra ones will be ignored by the customers and allowed to slide off the end, thus losing you a life.

If you succeed in satisfying enough customers quickly enough then you can progress via the bonus screen to the next bar. The bonus screen consists of one of those 'spot the tumbler' puzzles. The Soda Bandit stands behind seven cans lined up on the bar and then shakes six of them before jumbling them up. You have to pick the unshaken one to get the bonus score.

Another form of bonus may be scored by picking up any tips which customers leave behind them on the bartop, at which point a duo of dancing girls come on stage to entertain you for a short while. Unfortunately this also entertains the customers who may look round and thus miss their drinks and let them sail off the bar.

The barman can be moved up or down the bars, and he wraps around top to bottom as well. He may also advance along the bars to collect mugs more quickly. With each bar advanced through, the pace hots up, with more customers per bar, and some of the later bars are split level to make life even more difficult. *Tapper* has three skill levels and it all adds up to a game which goes to prove whether a man can hold his drink — literally!

CRITICISM

● 'I must admit that I haven't seen the arcade version of this, but the Spectrum game looks somewhat unusual. The graphics aren't impressive but functional, which is to say that they do their job. I feel sorry for the barman you control, who dashes about madly fulfilling an endless stream of customers' needs, and the faster you do it, the quicker you get off a screen. It's nice to have a break between frenzies when you are asked to guess the correct tumbler (you know the trick). This game gets extremely difficult as you progress and there are more and more people trying to quench their thirst through the varied bar layouts. *Tapper* is very playable, and its addictive qualities improve enormously when it's played in a group, everyone egging you on. I haven't worked so hard on a joystick since *Decathlon*!'

● *'Phew! As office high-score champ on* Tapper *(45,000, on easy level admittedly) I have to admit I liked the game which was suitably panic-inducing at times when glasses were about to topple off the end of two or three bars at virtually the same time. After a while I found I could get into a rhythm, serving and collecting glasses — and although I discovered you could go down the bar, towards the approaching empties to collect them I only managed to get into trouble when I employed this tactic. Overall an amusing and addictive game, offering good arcade action entertainment without graphical frills. The attitude of the customers to the barman reminded me of last orders in my local — murderous if service isn't instantaneous! Perhaps I should ask for a job . . . .'*

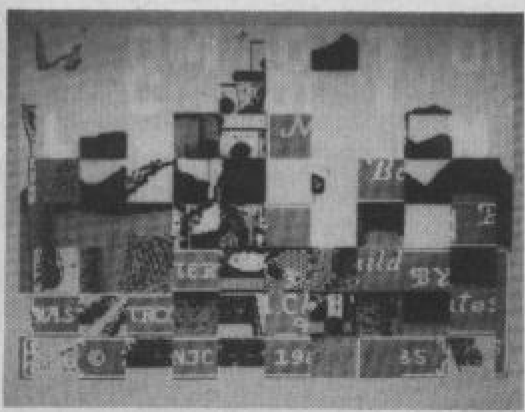
● '*Tapper*'s graphics are not instantly appealing, but as you play on, you realise that there is more going on that you first suppose, loads of amusing little details which all add to the general sense of fun. And fun is the key word in this game, a frenzied mad-cap dash to save your reputation as a barman, which requires a strong joystick wrist and unfailing fire finger. It's useful, if not essential, that after walking along a bar to collect mugs, a single joystick press will take you straight to your station at the end of another bar. Within minutes, I found *Tapper* to be hugely playable, and the game has just the right mix of ingredients, pace and skills needed to make it highly addictive. No, it's not a complex thinking game, it's just fun to play and well worth having!'

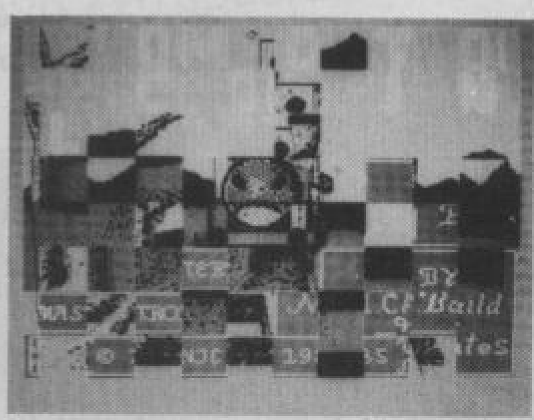


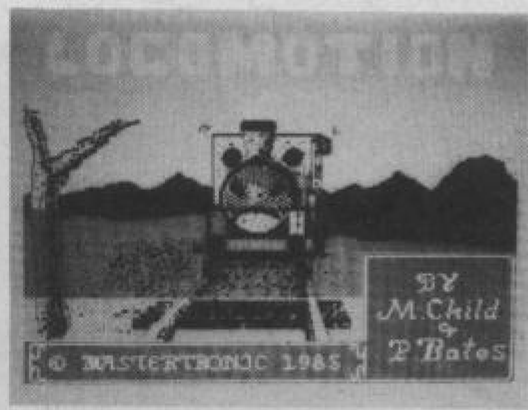
COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, four directional plus fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: sensibly used within a screen, and varied throughout
Graphics: well sized, not very gainly but lively and amusing
Sound: continuous tune
Skill levels: 3
Screens: 4 bar screens and the bonus screen
Lives: 5
Special features: 2 player games
General rating: a highly amusing, playable and addictive arcade game.

Use of computer	86%
Graphics	69%
Playability	88%
Getting started	84%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**89%**







Three stages in the clever loading screen for LOCOMOTION.

LOCO-MOTION

Producer: Mastertronic
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **M Child and P Bates**

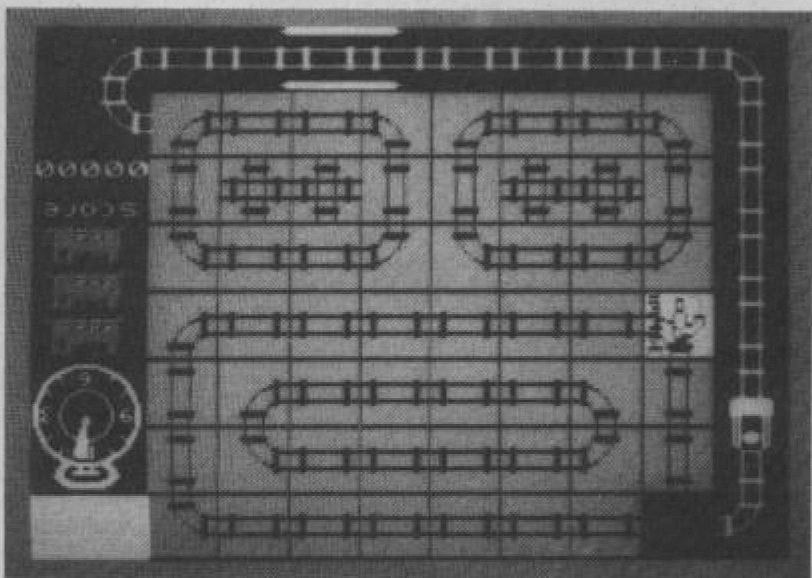
Crossing Europe by train is a chancy move, now Mastertronic set out to convince us that it safer by car, even across France.

Locomotion is based on a train race across Europe, through ten of its major cities in fact. The game really seems to capture the true European spirit — as you journey from city to city you will find that the locals have torn up and rearranged the tracks, they have even gone so far as to place themselves, their cars and sundry objects in the way.

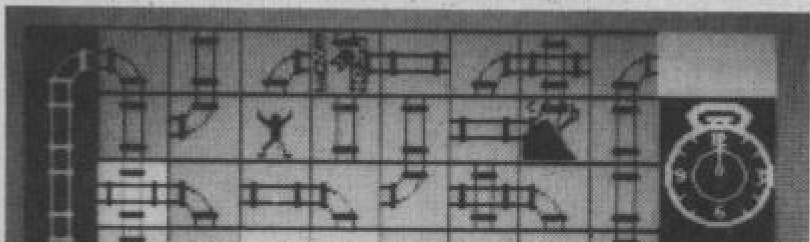
The playing area consists of a box with 55 squares, one of which is left empty to allow room for the others to be shuffled about. On most of the boxes there is a piece of track, it may be a bend a 'T' junction or simply a straight piece. The player must re-arrange the boxes so that the track is continuous, thus allowing the train to make its way to the next station. As each screen is completed more track boxes are replaced with obstacle boxes which include cars, trees, boulders and Europeans. Clearly these cannot be included in the track so they must be kept out of the way. The more squares that the train crosses the more points are awarded to the player and extra points are given for passing through squares with water or coal symbols.

The puzzle is very difficult to solve and quick thinking is essential to build up a complete unbroken line. The authors have thoughtfully included a feature that will arrest the trains progress while you think, but even so you are only allowed one minute between stations.

Most of the screen is taken up with the playing area, however, on the right hand side the name of the destination station is given, below that a clock shows how much of pause time you have used and the number of lives remaining. Initially each of up to four players have three lives each.



A nightmare network of lines, curves, points and cross-overs.





CRITICISM

● 'To be frank I am pretty useless at these sort of games, the bit of track that I needed always seemed to be at the other side of the screen. The facility to stop the train dead in its track was much needed but I would have preferred a delay facility more in line with British Rail standards, perhaps a couple of hours, by then I might have a got the situation under control. One of the games features that caught my eye was the loading screen, initially it is divided up into 55 chunks and gradually rearranges itself to form a picture, all this while the program pretends to load in the background, I say pretends to load because the yellow and blue lines behind the picture are there to give that impression. I also enjoyed the demo mode which the program throws itself into when it has grown weary of my blunders. All in all a very tidy game with attractive fast moving graphics with some nice detail, such a shame I can't play it!'

● *'Doing the locomotion could catch on again as a result of Mastertronic's new budget game* Locomotion. *Owing more than a little to K'tang K'tong, a game which reportedly wowed them in the Japanese cafe arcades, the game requires you to shuffle blocks around the screen. Arcade adventures? Why not arcade strategies? I think I prefered Incentive's block moving puzzle* Confuzion, *but for the price* Locomotion *presents enough of a challenge to merit a place in any puzzle freaks library.'*

● 'The *Locomotion* moving square loading screen is something that one does not expect to see in a £1.99 game. The idea of the game is great, it too is based on the moving square principle but it is a little on the hard side with only a 1 minute pause. Perhaps skill levels with different pause times would help. If things are going okay then it's not too bad but with ten countries and no stops things are going to be difficult. The graphics are reasonable but not spectacular. *Locomotion* will drive you loco, it's a real tough challenge but not a game for arcade zappers.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursor keys
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Fuller
Keyboard play: very quick
Use of colour: fairly simple
Graphics: smooth neat and clear
Sound: little but good
Skill levels: 1 but each screen gets harder
Lives: 3
Screens: 10
Special features: a superb 'trick' loading screen which describes the game idea excellently — a bit time consuming though
General rating: a fast-thinking puzzle game, with much more sense of fun than most, and a fair amount of addictiveness — certainly excellent value at £1.99.

Use of computer:	**79%**
Graphics	**60%**
Playability	**75%**
Getting started	**80%**
Addictive qualities	**72%**
Value for money	**88%**
Overall	**81%**

HOW THE RATINGS WORK

IMPORTANT CHANGE!!!

After more than a year of maintaining the CRASH rating system, we have made one important alteration. The **OVERALL** rating is **no longer calculated as a strict average of the previous 6 ratings.** Now each reviewer is independently allowed to judge the Overall worth of a game as a **separate rating**. We hope this will help overcome some of the inconsistencies which readers have noted in the past.

OVERALL PERCENTAGE is now a separate and distinct rating. ALL ratings are an average of three reviewers' opinions.

Under 30% — a waste of time
31-40% — generally poor but may appeal to some
41-50% — below average to average
51-55% — reasonable average if game type enjoyed
56-60% — above average to good
61-70% — good on most counts, generally recommended
71-80% — very good, recommended
81-89% — excellent
Above 90% — a CRASH Smash, words fail....

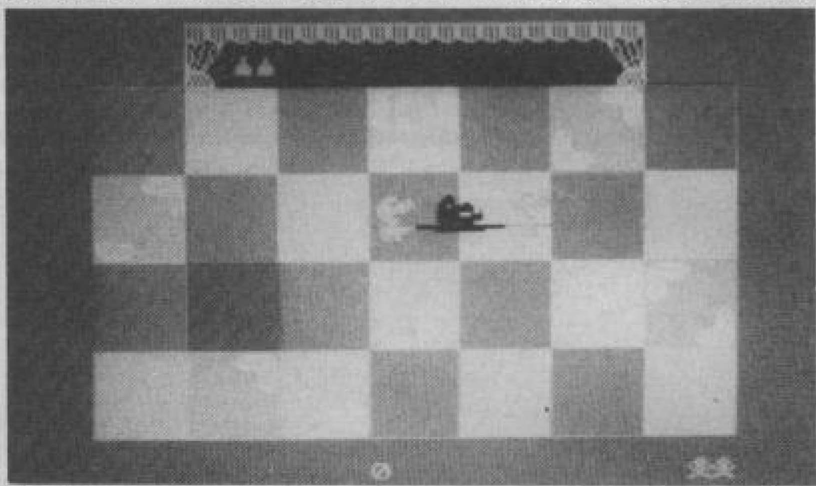
QUAD TRAP

Producer: Style Soft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£4.95**
Language: **machine code**

Question: what do get if you sit still on the *Quad Trap* stage?
Answer: Eaten!

To explain; the *Quad Trap* stage is a grid (5x7) of pretty squares, you are the chap in the middle and if you stay there you are going to get eaten by the 'Glutton'. The idea of the game is that you should try and change each of the squares from the original colour to red, how? Simply by moving over them, that's all there is to it — well almost. The problem is that you will not be left alone to wander the stage, muttering Hamlet to yourself while the squares beneath your feet change colour, Michael Jackson style (remember the first video, oh never mind), because of the monsters. Now while the 'Glutton' is harmless because of his low IQ and he won't catch you unless you get in his way, the same cannot be said of the 'Quad' monsters, they are a good deal smarter and will hunt for you. But all is not lost because you have in your pocket a large magic ball, this is your means of capturing the 'Glutton'. Drop it in front of him and he will stick to it and while he is thus compromised you can wheel the poor chap around and scoop up a 'Quad' monster with the idea of throwing him off the stage — one down three to go.

Only by clearing the monsters from the stage are you able to re-colour. The game has ten screens, each more difficult than its predeccesor. At the base of the screen the player is told how many lives he has remaining and how he has scored to date. One other little device which should prove valuable is the timer which shows how long the balls' magic power will last — just as well, imagine your surprise as you cart the 'Quad' to the edge of the stage only to find that the receptacle, the inanimate 'Glutton', has sprung back to life and is now chewing your leg.



The hero retires horizontally on a stretcher in QUADTRAP.

CRITICISM

● 'This game seems to have plenty of potential but it is ruined by the poor response from either the keyboard or joystick. I have no doubt that it can be both an entertaining and challenging game to play but I must confess that I found it very difficult, this may be due to the refusal of my character to move where and when I wanted it to. The resultant lack of progress gave the game something of a monotonous air.'

● 'Quad Trap *is the sort of game that looks as if it might be interesting at first only to become boring later on. While it has nice, well drawn graphics they are a little jerky. The program's sound leaves a lot to be desired but this is improved by using the Currah Microspeech option. After about an hour's play I decided that the first screen was almost impossible to complete. Generally I found this game very infuriating as it was so hard and just a little monotonous.'*

COMMENTS

Control keys: E/D up/down O/I left/right P drop ball
Joystick: Concom only
Keyboard play: good layout but very poor response
Use of colour: attractive
Graphics: entertaining
Sound: poor but Currah Microspeech option improves
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 10
General rating: lack of response spoils it.

Use of computer:	45%
Graphics	53%
Playability	60%
Getting started	55%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	50%
Overall	**48%**

The Band's On The Run!

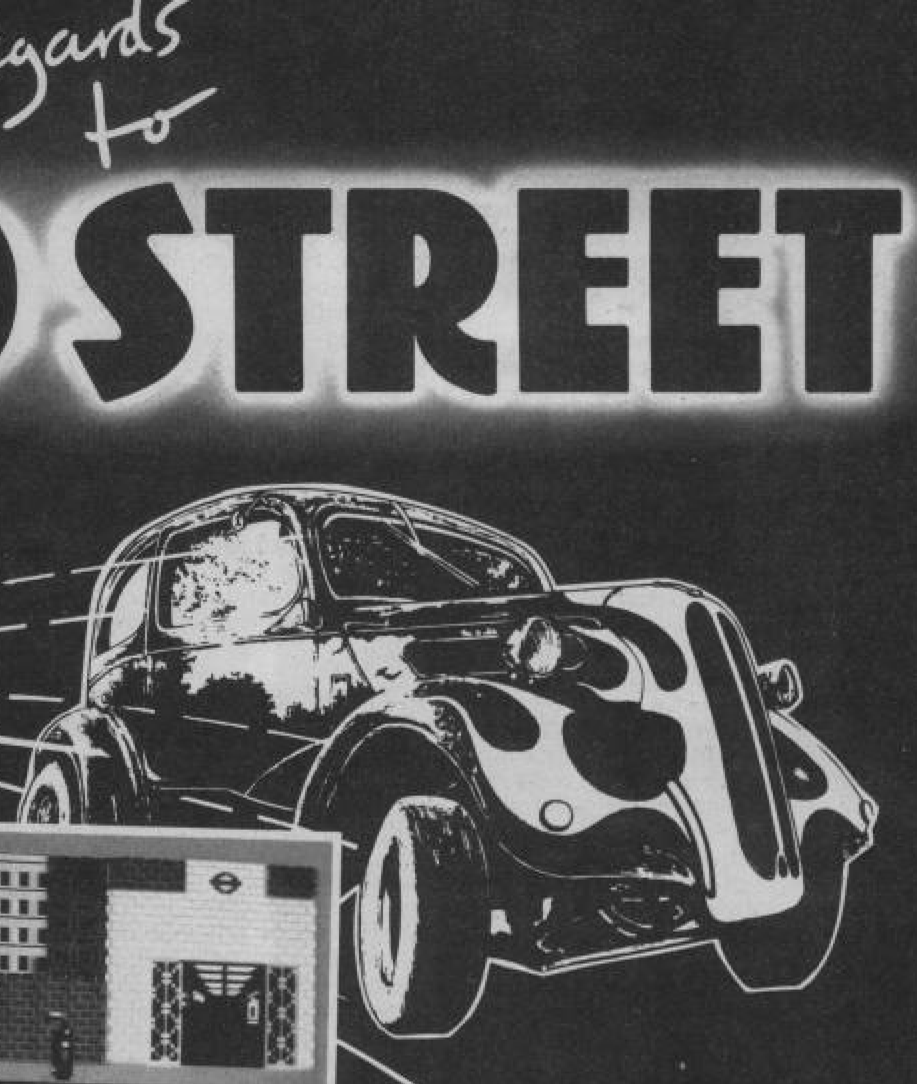
...7 busy characters, 10 lost chords, 15 hours, 48 Traffic Wardens, 95 London Tube Stations, 126,720 square feet of London, 7 million Londoners... 943 action filled screens.

PAUL McCARTNEY'S *Give my regards to*

BROAD STREET

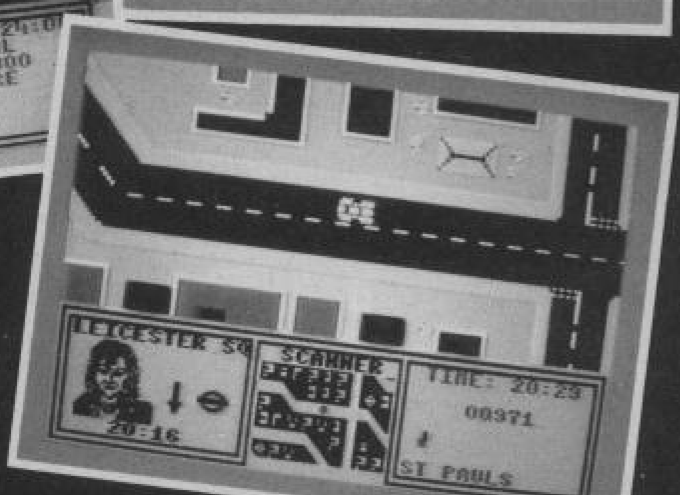
The new single is missing and the band have gone home for the weekend — leaving you just 15 hours to re-create the missing tune.

A race against time around London to find each member of the missing band. You have to watch out for blue meanies, wardens and Rath! A clever strategy game, full of excitement, brilliant graphics and all wrapped-up with McCartney music!











MIND GAMES

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DAILY EXPRESS says 'STUNNING'

NONTERRAQUEOUS

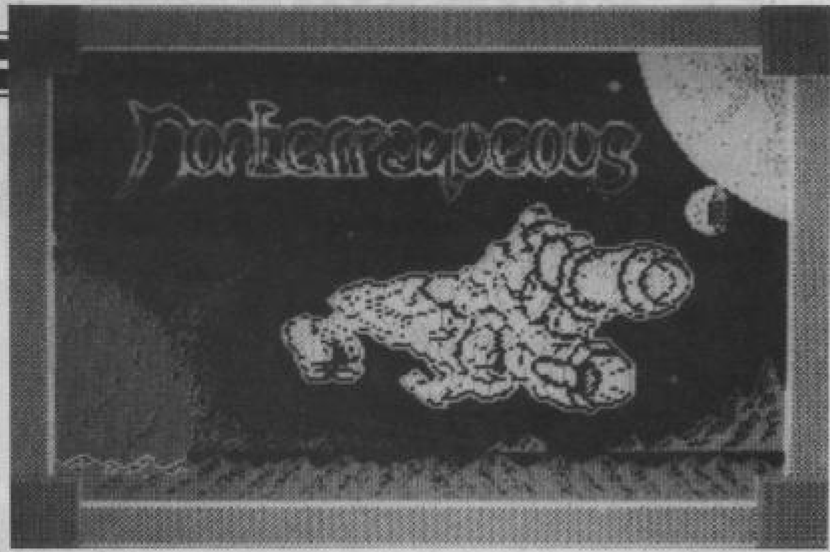
Producer: Mastertronic
Memory Required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Curtis and Mark Jacobs**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a game, possessed of original graphics and good ideas, must be in want of a publisher. Yes well, thank you Jane, you are, of course correct. *Nonterraqueous* arrived at CRASH thought control with little more than the envelope it stood up in.

Thankfully *Nonterraqueous* is only half as difficult to describe as it is to pronounce. There is a planet (type: cold and forbidding) that is ruled by a computer (type: schizophrenic, paranoid eg Marvin but without the smile) and populated by a people (type: suppressed for too long, eg CRASHless), the unfriendly computer is located in a mountain (type: big, cold and as yet unpenetrated). The population (type: defined above) decide to to build a robot of their own (type: spherical, guided, thick) and send it into the labryinth (type: 1004 rooms, 42 levels) in order destroy the computer within. You (type: human, CRASH reader, smart) have to guide the robot past all sorts of lethal obstacles (types: photon thrusters, floaters, rapid repeat lasers, force fields, rooms of corrosive gas, bombs, rockets, more bombs, etc) in order to reach the chamber that houses the computer.

To complete the mission successfully will require a great deal more than just a good trigger finger. Many of the obstacles require adventure-like solutions so it's thinking positron protective dome time again. As your robot moves from screen to screen it comes across some weird and wonderful shapes dashing all over the set. These little chaps are harmless (update: mostly harmless), they can be destroyed with laser fire but collision with them, or indeed with any other object, will damage your psyche level (dictionary: for Psyche read Energy). You can recharge the energy level by plugging into psychers. Keep a look out for objects that will help with the various problems, some you will be able to pick up and carry, bombs, fuel pods and the like, larger objects may have a more immediate use but some objects may have undesirable effects when picked up.

Below the playing area indicators give the score, psyche, number of bombs carried and the level that you are currently on. The authors have had the presence of mind to give an indication of the game completed percentage to provide good players a means of describing to others just how good they are.



Unusually attractive graphics make their first appearance in the loading screen of NONTERRAQUEOUS.

CRITICISM

● 'I enjoyed playing this game with its great graphics. It will require a great deal of skill to complete, not least because of its vast size. The laser forcefields, which advance and retract very quickly, have been designed to take you by surprise whenever you start a new screen. The mini-adventure element makes this enjoyably more than a shoot em up maze game, an example being the bomb that might be collected from a lower offshoot of the early maze and dragged along for a few screens until an impassable barrier is reached. Here the bomb can be used to devastating effect (and good visual effect too). It all adds up to a good for value at the price game.'

● *'This game has been around the CRASH offices for a few days now and nobody has yet worked out how to pronounce its name (we just call it* Whatsit!*). I think* Nonterraqueous *is one of the most playable games I've seen this month. It has jolly graphics which are well animated and only slightly jerky. The sound provides mainly spot effects with a tune for the title screen and it would have been an improvement if continuous sound had been included.*

● 'One thing that comes to mind before you play this game is how they fit in 1004 screens — it's a huge, complex maze, but all the locations are really redrawn repeats. There aren't that many aliens to come up against, and they don't kill you, they just rob you of strength, and once shot they don't reappear, which is a bit disappointing. To keep you awake there are forcefields which you must judge correctly to get past, some are very easy and some are difficult. After playing the game for some while things get a little boring as there doesn't seem to be much going on. You can count screen after screen of laser barriers, repeated objects and sometimes three aliens. The walls of the maze, however, are extremely well designed, not unlike the drawings in *Psytron* which adds to the look of the game but plays no real part except for robbing you of more strength if you touch them. A graphically pleasing game but one that could do with more action to keep you entranced within the game.'

COMMENTS

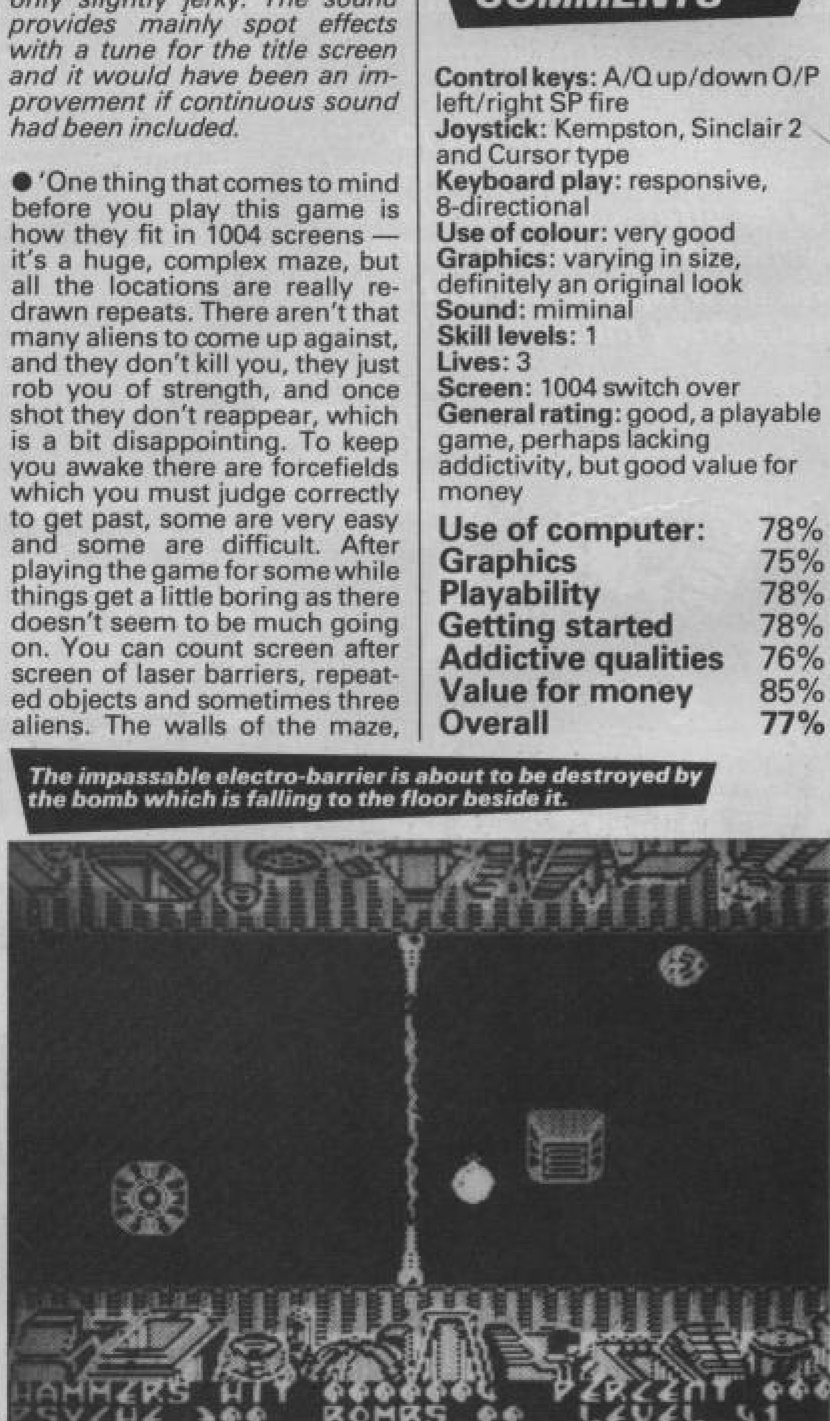
Control keys: A/Q up/down O/P left/right SP fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2 and Cursor type
Keyboard play: responsive, 8-directional
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: varying in size, definitely an original look
Sound: miminal
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screen: 1004 switch over
General rating: good, a playable game, perhaps lacking addictivity, but good value for money

Use of computer:	78%
Graphics	75%
Playability	78%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	76%
Value for money	85%
Overall	**77%**

Your craft is the round-shaped object on the right, firing a laser blast past a hapless alien.



The impassable electro-barrier is about to be destroyed by the bomb which is falling to the floor beside it.





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The Gremlin's always got h



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STAR GAME
ARCHON is brilliant. There's something in it for all games addicts; arcade, adventure and strategy are all here. My only complaint is that it's best played against a human opponent – the computer's just too good and you can't give it a handicap.
Bryan Skinner
Personal Computer News
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from Electronic Arts
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*and/or keyboard control (Spectrum & Amstrad versions)
ariolasoft

BROAD STREET

Producer: Mind Games
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**

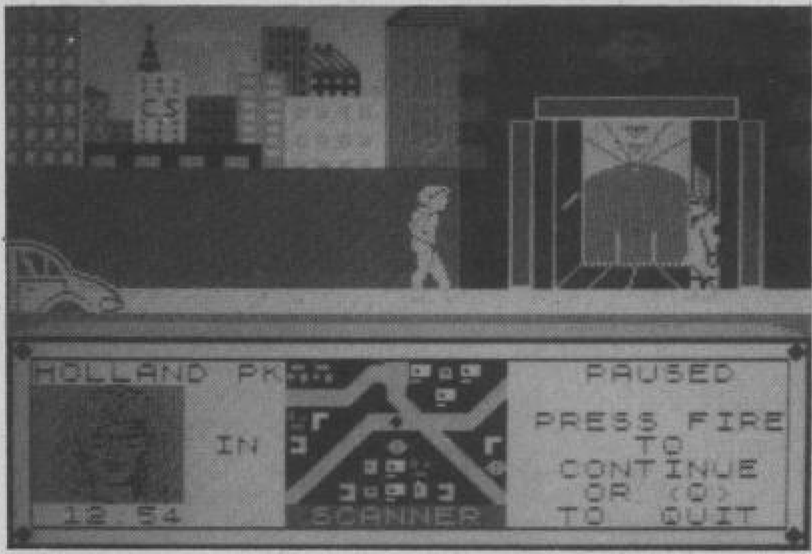
This game could have been called the 'Wrath of Rath' since that's what your going to encounter when you lose. The player is asked to suspend belief for a little while as he takes on the role of Paul McCartney who, through no fault of his own, finds himself at the mercy of the group's evil backer, Rath. It seems that Rath has put up the money for the group to record their new album but the master tape was accidently erased. The engineers have managed to piece together all of the material bar one track, 'No More Lonely Nights' which just happens to be the track intended for single release. Your problem is that there is no other way of putting the track back together other than relying on the memories of those who attended the original recording. Rath has given you until midnight on Saturday to recover and remix the track otherwise he will call in his loans and end up owning the the lot.

Broad Street could be classified as a strategy-arcade-adventure, the strongest element being the strategy one. There are seven characters, all of whom will be able to recall some part of the melody, all that is required is for you to find them and gather up the song, then take it back to Abbey Road in order that you can re-mix it. (Abbey Road is, of course, the recording studio made famous by the Beatles and immortalised on an LP). The game is set in London on a Saturday so each of the characters will be doing 'their own thing'. You must read and learn the characters' profiles provided with the game so that you can and anticipate their movements and be waiting to meet them when they emerge from a tube station. For example, fairly early on in the game your car computer will tell you that George Martin has just arrived at Heathrow. Anyone who has just returned from a far and distant land must be in need of a wash and brush up, the character profile tells you that Mr Martin lives in London W8. Find the nearest tube station to his home (in this case it is Holland Park) and drive there as fast as you can, if you catch him he will give you part of the tune. Anticipating the movements of each of the characters is by far the hardest part of the game but you will need to learn the whereabouts of the important tube stations otherwise you will waste precious time looking them up on the map.

The screen is divided into four parts. For most of the time the upper two thirds is used to show a bird's eye view of your car and the road you are driving along. Using this screen, you must guide the car to the required destination. However, during the meeting sequence the action is shown in this upper section. The lower third is divided into three parts, the left side is the information being given to you by your car's on-board computer, it provides a picture of a character together with the name of the tube station that he or she is using. You will be told whether they are going in or coming out. The middle section displays a street map of the immediate area, a little blip shows your relative position. The right side of the screen gives the name of the tube station that you are nearest, the current time and shows how much of the tune you have managed to gather so far.

Driving the car round town will call for some pretty nifty finger work, you will find your car bouncing of a few walls before you get the hang of it. While a few bounces do no harm to your vehicle the other cars, some driven by Rath's hired thugs, will destroy it if you don't avoid them. If you lose a car, due either to a crash or your being clamped, you can always get a new one from Abbey Road but you will waste a lot of time. On arriving at a tube station you can select the meeting sequence and watch the upper screen display change. You will see yourself pacing up and down outside the tube station but don't expect to be able to stay there for ever, sooner or later a yellow striped parking vulture will appear and, if he gets to your car before you do, he will clamp it.

If you manage to find the seven characters and recover the lost tune your last task is to get back to Abbey Road and remix the song, but don't forget you are still racing against the clock. The problem at this stage is learning how to use the mixing desk, the instructions refuse to tell but instead give only a cryptic clue. If you haven't managed to put the song together by midnight then Rath will have his way and you, with your guitar, will be on them streets.



Ah, found a band member at last, and lurking outside Holland Park tube as well.

CRITICISM

● 'My first reaction to this game was one of absolute horror, how on Earth was I going to find out where all of these people where going, let alone how to get there before they did?. To be honest I still haven't had the time to suss it out completely. I thought the driving, though difficult, was particularly effective, I enjoyed being able to swan around London in a vain attempt to find my way about. The on-board computer was a great aid but most if the time it brought about a feeling of panic when I realised that I had missed a character, in my haste I ended up bouncing from wall to wall getting thoroughly frustrated. There is, however, a way to play this game without trying to anticipate people's movements about the metropolis — start the game and make a note of people's arrivals and departures, then restart and use your notes to find them. This is useful for the weak strategists such as myself, but I suspect that at the end of the day the failure to include some sort of random element in the game could prove its weakness. On the whole I have enjoyed it and when this issue has 'gone to bed' I shall purloin one of the Spectrums, sit in a corner, and finish it.'

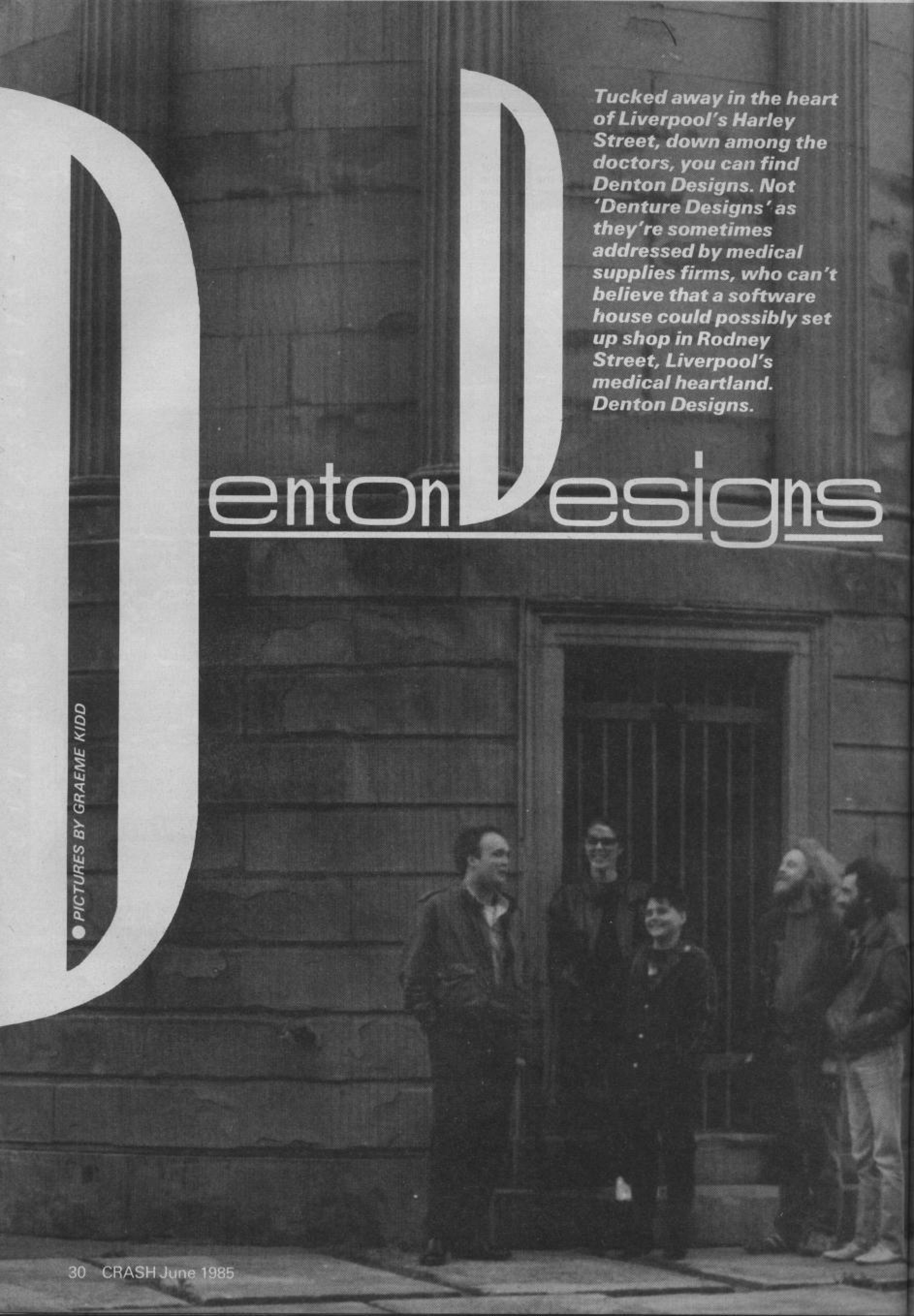
● *'I suppose it's quite unusual to have a car-based game where you drive around London looking for bits and pieces of your song, in a world where many other people are after the same thing. What I found difficult about this game was not just the enemy cars that are out to get you or the time factor, what I found most difficult was trying to find my way around the wretched place; with the names and locations of so many tube stations to remember. I think the strategic idea behind the game is good but being an all-action person, there doesn't seem to be a great deal in between A and B. Okay, there are a few cars to avoid but not much else. The street map layout is very good and not over complicated. It will take a very long time to explore all of the possibilities; although it takes a considerable amount of time to get into the rhythm of the game.'*

● 'This is the most attractive looking game that Argus have ever produced, and one of the most complex (excepting *Alien*). The programmers have managed to fit an extraordinary amount of London into it, and the simplified road map well resembles the real thing. But perhaps that's the main problem — if you know London then you have a head start, if you don't then you will spend a lot of time studying the map first. Initial impressions that this is a road type arcade game are soon dispelled, because the real task comes in learning about the band members you are trying to find. Frustration can be almost terminal when you dash to a tube station only to find the guy has slipped inside and is now reported emerging from another several streets away. A sense of achievement grows when you begin to spot ahead where someone is likely to be and get to the tube in time to meet them. The graphics are fine and I particularly like the way the car bounces off kerb stones. *Broad Street*, is not a game of a few minutes, and for me it is more playable than another which it vaguely resembles — *Ghostbusters*.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: A — forward and accelerate, Z to slow down N/M left/right, Space to meet, O to pause
Joystick: Protek, Kempston, Fuller, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: good layout and responds well
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: fairly fast and smooth
Sound: not much, although it plays a rather warbly 'No More Lonely Nights' during pauses
Skill levels: 1
Lives: game limited by time, about half an hour in all
Screens: smooth scrolling with one animated screen.
General rating: an involving game that is both novel and well designed.

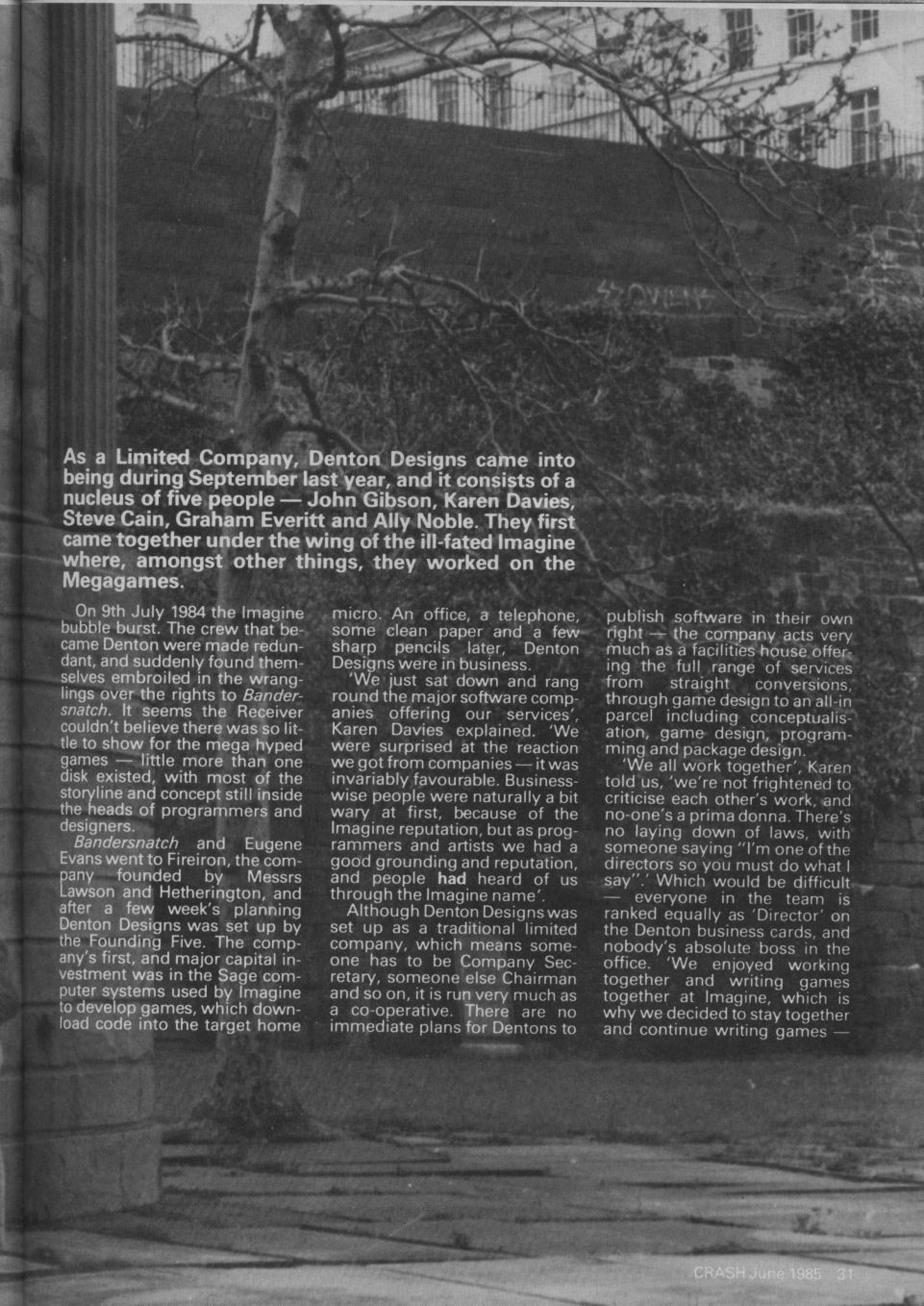
Use of computer:	82%
Graphics	82%
Playability	76%
Getting started	85%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**81%**



Denton Designs

Tucked away in the heart of Liverpool's Harley Street, down among the doctors, you can find Denton Designs. Not 'Denture Designs' as they're sometimes addressed by medical supplies firms, who can't believe that a software house could possibly set up shop in Rodney Street, Liverpool's medical heartland. Denton Designs.

● *PICTURES BY GRAEME KIDD*



As a Limited Company, Denton Designs came into being during September last year, and it consists of a nucleus of five people — John Gibson, Karen Davies, Steve Cain, Graham Everitt and Ally Noble. They first came together under the wing of the ill-fated Imagine where, amongst other things, they worked on the Megagames.

On 9th July 1984 the Imagine bubble burst. The crew that became Denton were made redundant, and suddenly found themselves embroiled in the wranglings over the rights to *Bandersnatch*. It seems the Receiver couldn't believe there was so little to show for the mega hyped games — little more than one disk existed, with most of the storyline and concept still inside the heads of programmers and designers.

Bandersnatch and Eugene Evans went to Fireiron, the company founded by Messrs Lawson and Hetherington, and after a few week's planning Denton Designs was set up by the Founding Five. The company's first, and major capital investment was in the Sage computer systems used by Imagine to develop games, which download code into the target home micro. An office, a telephone, some clean paper and a few sharp pencils later, Denton Designs were in business.

'We just sat down and rang round the major software companies offering our services', Karen Davies explained. 'We were surprised at the reaction we got from companies — it was invariably favourable. Businesswise people were naturally a bit wary at first, because of the Imagine reputation, but as programmers and artists we had a good grounding and reputation, and people **had** heard of us through the Imagine name'.

Although Denton Designs was set up as a traditional limited company, which means someone has to be Company Secretary, someone else Chairman and so on, it is run very much as a co-operative. There are no immediate plans for Dentons to publish software in their own right — the company acts very much as a facilities house offering the full range of services from straight conversions, through game design to an all-in parcel including conceptualisation, game design, programming and package design.

'We all work together', Karen told us, 'we're not frightened to criticise each other's work, and no-one's a prima donna. There's no laying down of laws, with someone saying "I'm one of the directors so you must do what I say".' Which would be difficult — everyone in the team is ranked equally as 'Director' on the Denton business cards, and nobody's absolute boss in the office. 'We enjoyed working together and writing games together at Imagine, which is why we decided to stay together and continue writing games —



- STEVE CAIN
- ALLY NOBLE
- JOHN GIBSON
- KAREN DAVIES
- GRAHAM EVERITT

Denton Designs



it's good fun' she added.

Argument, discussion, debate are all shared, with everyone participating in the work of the company as a whole. Each program, whether it is a conversion job ('we try to squeeze them in between big projects as they pay the wages') or a major piece of work is treated as a project. Specific staff or freelance helpers are assigned to a project, but in reality everyone gets a say in the final product, passing comment as the work progresses.

Denton Designs

So far Denton have converted *Spy Hunter* for the Spectrum and are currently working on implementing *Roland Rat* on the same machine. *Gift From the Gods* was their first large project, for Ocean. David Ward of Ocean wanted a new game in time for Christmas and went to Denton who put forward a couple of ideas. A choice was made, and Denton produced the game on schedule.

Frankie Goes to Hollywood, previewed on the following pages by Dash Ed himself, was born from a very basic brief indeed: 'We don't want lots of Frankies running around, otherwise it's up to you' is the gist of what David Ward passed on as his requirement. And the end result is going to be pretty knockout, I assure you . . . .

Shadowfire, commissioned by Beyond and reviewed fully this issue, is the first major piece of work executed by Dentons that's already in the shops. '*Lords of Midnight* was one of the main spurs to Denton Designs — Mike Singleton is my hero', Steve Cain explained, '*Lords of Midnight* is one of my favourite games and it prompted us to approach Beyond. We did everything on *Shadowfire* including the packaging design, story and system'.

'We did the visuals and a full specification for the game and then talked through it with Beyond', Karen added, 'then we went away and changed a lot of it . . . . Beyond were well impressed when we showed them the finished product'.

'We do what we want to a degree — and it's nice to be able to choose who we work for — before signing contracts we talk about how we like to work, taking responsibility for the end product'.

'People are often a bit taken aback when they come and see us for the first time', said Ally as we stumbled into their offices after the drive from Ludlow, made near-fatal by an utter nerd who nearly had us in a ditch, 'we're a bit of a mixture ... we're all different'.

Wacky and zany, zany and wacky? Well not really, just not quite fully paid up members of the collar and tie brigade. Steve Cain could be described as a 'cyclical hippy — he can't make his mind up whether he should grow his hair or keep it short. Every so often he scampers out, gets a super smart haircut and buys up half of Liverpool's mens outfitters' stock. Then his hair grows, and the image slowly changes back.

Karen, Ally and Steve all have an Art College background. Karen and Ally are the design mainstays who, like Steve, got involved in computer screen design when they joined Imagine. Karen, who was working on the C64 screens for *Frankie* when we arrived, trained in textile design which led her to a job in France. This was followed by a spell freelancing in Italy, then she returned to this country and was 'headhunted' into Imagine.

Ally Noble, on the other hand, the Queen of the Spectrum Screen (she'll murder me when she reads that) was a community artist type person who was working on a travelling video workshop project before going to Imagine for an interview. Ally met Steve Cain in the interview room and immediately started chatting to him about old times when they were at Liverpool Art College together — and despite their unusual approach to formal interviews, they were both hired!

Of the quintet, John Gibson's progress into games programming is probably the most spectacular. He was working in Cornwall installing suspended ceilings in offices when he decided to give it all up, move to Liverpool and enrol on a TOPS computer programming course. Newly qualified when he finished the course, John seemed destined to serve his time in the data processing bowels of some large company's mainframe installation.

Then, over a pint, he was asked by an Imagine person if he was a machine code programmer. 'Yes', John replied, and was hired on the spot. A few weeks later he was zooming round the streets of Liverpool in a company Porsche, getting paid a handsome salary for writing code on the Spectrum and watching the fire extinguisher fights in Chateau Imagine with amazement.

'I couldn't believe it', he said, 'suddenly I'd got the kind of job my Mum was always on at me to get'. Sadly it didn't last too long — now there's not even a company C5 at Denton, and serious work is going on all day (and into quite a few nights).

Graham Everitt — 'Kenny' to all his friends, including his wife — was originally a carpenter. Like John, he changed trades and worked on a freelance basis for Imagine writing their systems software and developing utilities for the Sage machines. Now with Denton, Kenny is still the Main Man when it comes to sorting out the Sages, but he's started work on games programming too, and is currently working on *Frankie*.

Dentons have no plans to publish software in their own right just yet, although Karen admitted 'the more we get into it, the more we want to see a game on the shelves with the Denton Design name on it'. It's a matter of economics ultimately. Denton is not in a financial position to publish just yet. 'We had originally planned to sit down at the start of this year and assess our progress and make decisions about where the company should be going' Kenny explained, 'but somehow we never quite had the time. In the longer term we would like to bring out our own titles'

Shadowfire 2 and a high speed, arcade-action sports game with detailed animation are the next two projects on the Denton Drawing board. A complete system, which could be used for educational programs as well as for games, is under development at Denton. *Shadowfire*, with its icons is part one, *Frankie* with the windows is part two and *Shadowfire 2*, which will have animated graphics controlled through icons will form part three.

● THE 'CYCLICAL' HIPPY — STEVE CAIN (TOP) WITH LONGER HAIR IN AN EARLIER PUBLICITY SHOT



A churlish observer would point out that icon driven software and windows zooming out of the screen are hardly innovative in themselves, having been well-established in business software. But it's the implementation that counts, and the way these features are incorporated into the game design which makes the Denton product outstanding. Anyway, no-one else had the programming or conceptual skills to incorporate windows in an arcade-adventure type of game, nor did the idea of having a non-text adventure see the light before *Shadowfire*.

Not surprisingly, the Five at Denton get a little pee'd off with the 'Ex-Imagine' label that it is so easy to apply to them. After all, they're just as much ex-ceiling fitters and ex-community artists. No. Given the standard of their product, the innovative qualities of their games designs together with the enthusiasm they have for the job they do (which shows through in the software they produce) it's much fairer to say that Imagine was 'Pre-Denton' So there.

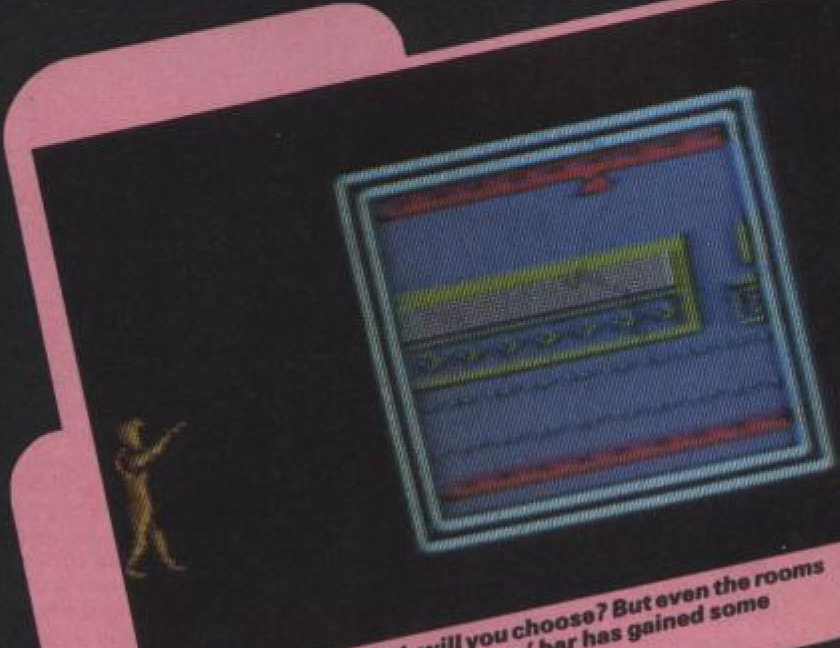
Denton Designs



WELCOME TO THE

Possibly the oddest tie-in yet between a computer game and its original inspiration must be FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD THE GAME designed by DENTON DESIGNS and produced by OCEAN. In an exclusive CRASH preview, we bring you a glimpse behind the scenes and a chance to see some of the screens in what could well become a classic.

FACED WITH one of the more outrageous pop bands of recent years, how do you turn them into a computer game? This is the nightmare that faced the Denton Designs team when Ocean's David Ward blithely announced that Ocean had signed a deal with the management of Frankie Goes to Hollywood to produce a computer game based on the group. The brief was simple and to the point according to Steve Cain. 'David walked in and said he wanted a game with no Frankies walking about in it.' This was quite a bit before Christmas, when Dentons started to think seriously about how to go about the game, and the first step was to immerse themselves in the Frankie ethic.



Rooms iris out — which will you choose? But even the rooms fire at you. In this shot, the 'love' bar has gained some points.

'We didn't want to turn out the game I'm sure everyone expected,' says Ally Noble, graphics artist for the Spectrum version, 'a platform game with the group jumping around the place. Ocean announced that the Frankie game would be previewed at the LET show, so we thought we would pop down to see what it ought to look like!'

Needless to say, *Frankie* wasn't ready for the LET, indeed the ideas hadn't even fully jelled by then!

As designers of games like *Gift from the Gods* and the amazing new *Shadowfire*, it isn't surprising that the team should continue along similar lines both visually and technically; 'It's a lot of games within games, mazes within mazes,' says John Gibson, programmer of the Spectrum version. It is also, as far as I know, the first computer game to feature a 'MacGuffin'.

The film director Alfred Hitchcock used MacGuffins a lot and probably invented the name — MacGuffin, like 'John Doe' is a sort of unidentified murder victim at the beginning of a film. The audience think they are settling down to watch a murder mystery, but the murder and victim are merely excuses to start a story that has very little to do with the murder. MacGuffins tend to disappear soon after the film gets under way because the audience becomes so enthralled with the actual story that they forget about them.

Frankie also starts out with a murder mystery to solve, but as the game progresses, solving it merely becomes one of many equally important tasks. You are the shadowy figure of the Frankie







PLEASUREDOME



A typical boring sitting room in Everydays-Ville, but there's magic everywhere — in a TV, perhaps a flying duck, maybe even the cat sat on the mat. . . .

'Equation', almost a non-person, living a mundane existence in Everydays-Ville, a boring suburb where nothing exciting ever happens — until a murder takes place. Looming over Everydays-Ville is the enticing shadow of the Pleasuredome — a symbol for modern day escapism. To relieve the boredom of Everydays-Ville you escape through TVs and computers, getting involved with fast arcade games until you realise that you can become a complete, well formed person fit to enter the very centre of the Pleasuredome.

Frankie has many layers to it. On the outside is Everydays-Ville, a street of houses which may be entered, containing rooms which may also be entered. Objects can be collected to help with your tasks, fittings like TVs and computers are magical entryways into the Pleasuredome. Inside the Pleasuredome are more layers, rooms with arcade games and puzzles to solve. With every achievement your personality file grows, shown by the Equation's four bar charts. Succeeding at the puzzles and games takes you deeper, into a 3D maze with very few exits, but the exits to other rooms increase with your achievements too, making the push to become a complete personality easier.

There are characters in the game as well, representing good and evil, and your dealings with these will determine whether your points increase or go down. Eventually you will achieve enough personality points to enter the centre of the Pleasuredome for the finale.

The graphics Dentons have designed draw heavily on the imagery of Frankie Goes to Hollywood. Large artbooks lie around on tables as reference for cherubs, an idea developed from *The Power of Love* video; the scene becomes an arcade sequence where you have to hop along passing clouds while the cherubs fire arrows at you from the side. ZTT's logo becomes a complex little jigsaw puzzle. Frankie's Liverpudlian background is also used, which suits Dentons as they are based in Liverpool, when you have to stop the bombers from destroying Merseyside, scoring points for every important site saved. In a shooting gallery, familiar faces pop up, Maggie, Ronnie, Andy Warhol and others. The game's graphics owe something to those of *Shadowfire* (although *Frankie* isn't exactly icon-driven), with rooms irising out over the former background, allowing your character to enter them. The ideas in *Shadowfire* were worked out in great detail, according to Steve; 'We wanted to have a sequel to develop the ideas, and if *Shadowfire* was part one, *Frankie* is part two. But the things in *Frankie* have been put in spontaneously, unlike *Shadowfire*, so *Frankie* is more varied.'

Variety is certainly the key word in this highly unusual game which has surely gone far beyond what anyone responsible for setting up the deal ever expected. Asked two months ago what on earth the game would be like, Ocean's David Ward smiled with confidence and replied that it would be — well — fabulous. His confidence appears not to have been misplaced.



The Experiment Room within the Pleasuredome. Through the door on the left lurks a luscious woman clad in leather, pleading to be freed, while at the right is a green monster — but nothing is as it seems in the Pleasuredome.

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As **Lloyd Mangram** mentioned in his letters page, he's been told to get it together (we've generously provided him with a second tiny desk) and organise an Index for the 12 issues your binder will hold. The index is **absolutely FREE** to anyone who orders the binder and will be sent automatically in January.

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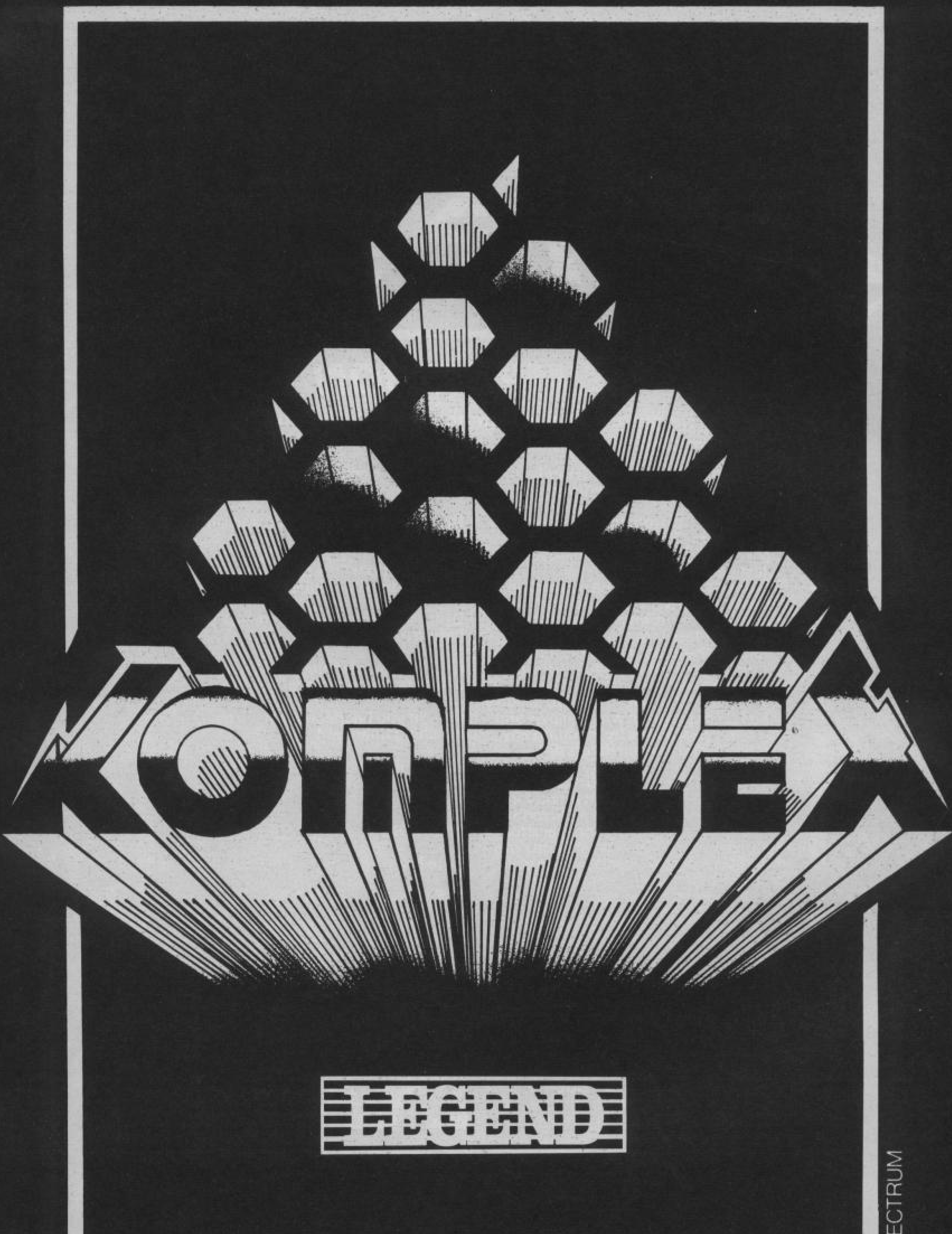
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48K SPECTRUM

Crash Competition

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The Komplexity is Legend — Win A Microdrive

com'plex *a.* intricate, compound, involved.—*n.* complicated whole

As you can see from the above extract from Jeremy Spencer's well-chewed pocket dictionary, Legend named their latest game aptly.

To start with, the game comes with the letters **KOMPLEX** scattered in the multi-level maze which forms the alien ship. Your task is to scamper round, avoiding the attacking robots, find the letters and store them safely in the appropriate racks.

A game editing facility is also included with the program which allows you to create new mazes by inputting any combination of seven letters or numbers.

Legend have sponsored this competition to get you in the right mood for *Komplex* and first prize is a Microdrive and Interface One. The winner and four runners up will also receive a copy of *Komplex II* when it is released as well as a Komplex T-shirt, and the next twenty people in line also stand to win a T-Shirt.

This is what you do: Printed here are seven phrases taken from the pages of this issue of CRASH. Hunt through until you find them, and when you do write down the number of the page on which each phrase appears. Then add up the page numbers to come up with a grand total and send in your entry form to **KOMPLEX COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive before **25th July**.

A) . . . some creators of educational programs are involving children . . .

B) . . . develop a headache and simply stop working . . .

C) . . . the poor little beast attempts to start reading immediately . . .

D) . . . the game's awesome task was before me . . .

E) . . . the extra dimension and interest of artistic compositions . . .

F) . . . if you happened to have been watching Channel 4 . . .

G) . . . the Ludlow mafia subs have been paid for the year . . .

ANSWERS:

Page Number

A) ____ **E)** ____

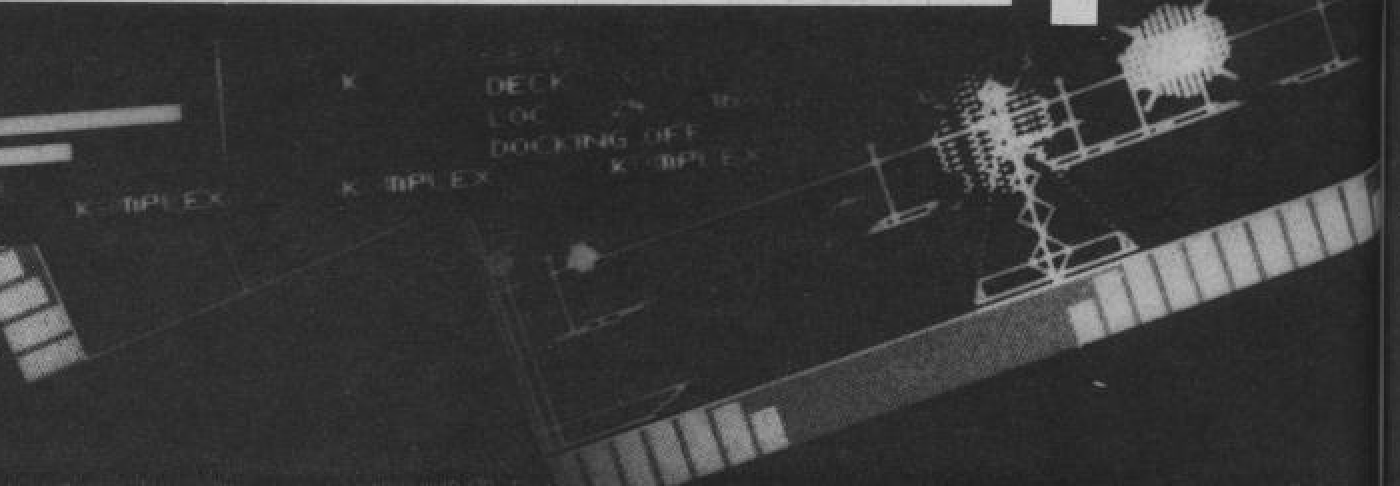
B) ____ **F)** ____

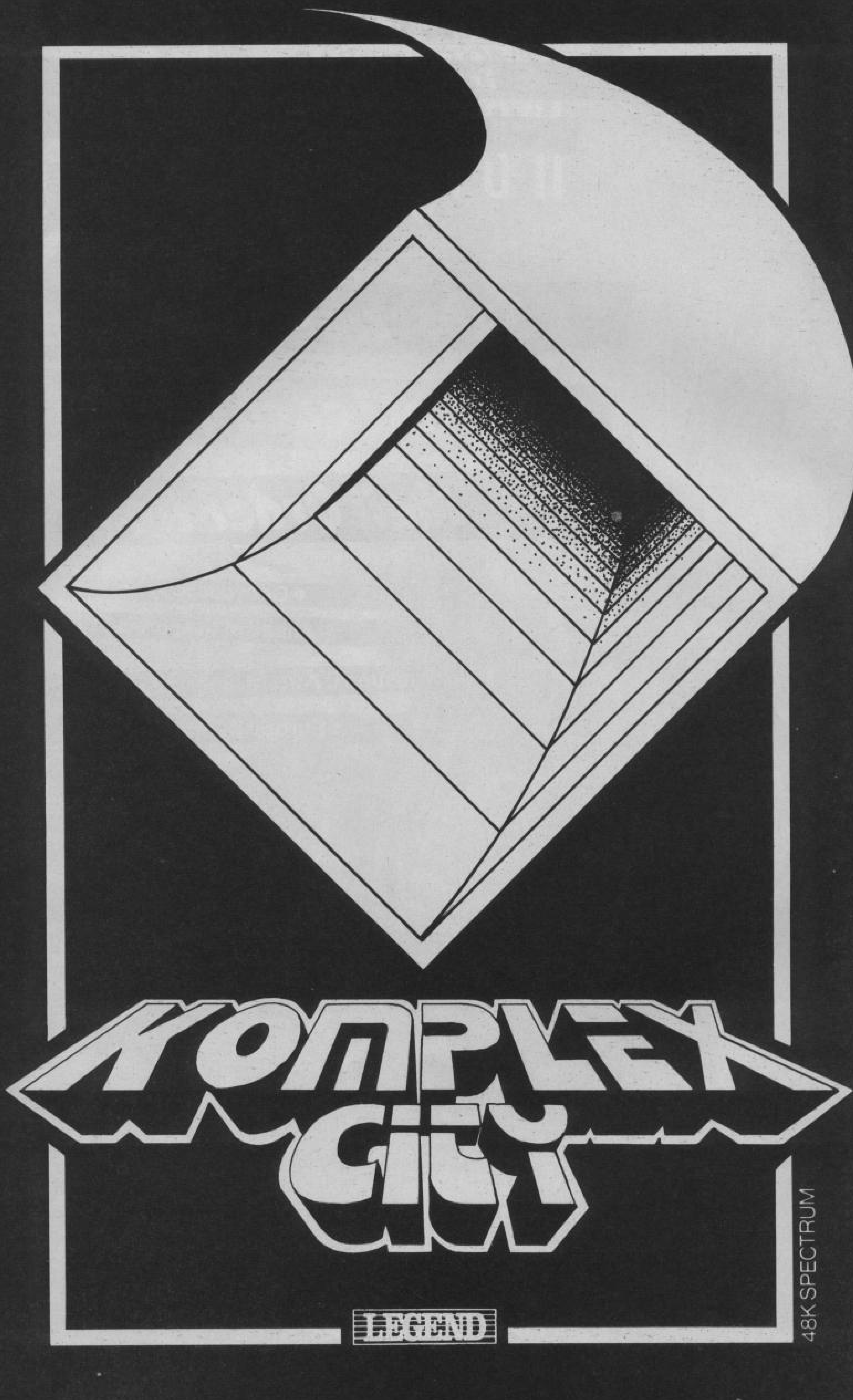
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D) ____ **Total:** ____

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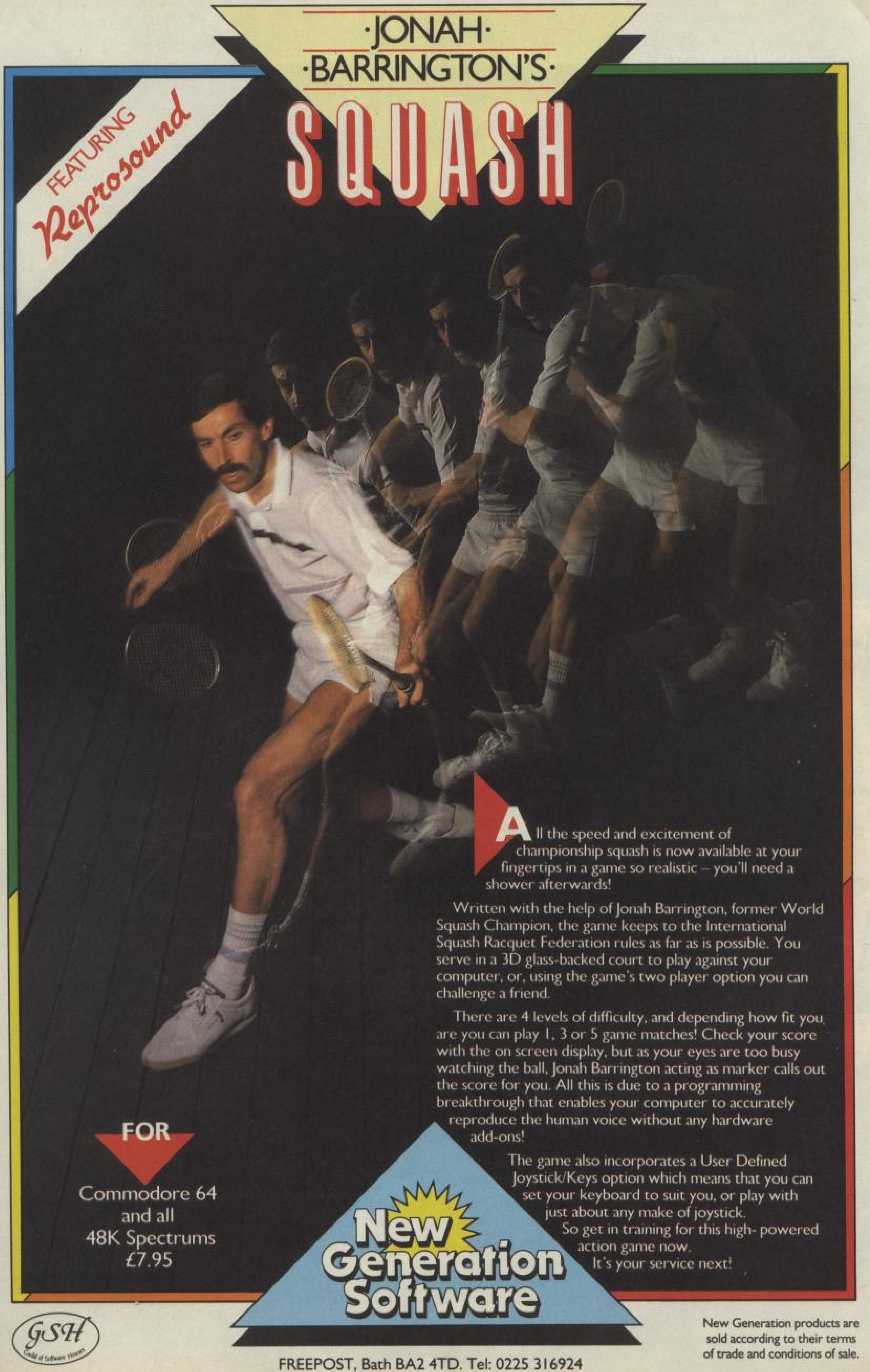
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FEATURING
Reprosound
All the speed and excitement of championship squash is now available at your fingertips in a game so realistic – you'll need a shower afterwards!
Written with the help of Jonah Barrington, former World Squash Champion, the game keeps to the International Squash Racquet Federation rules as far as is possible. You serve in a 3D glass-backed court to play against your computer, or, using the game's two player option you can challenge a friend.
There are 4 levels of difficulty, and depending how fit you are you can play 1, 3 or 5 game matches! Check your score with the on screen display, but as your eyes are too busy watching the ball, Jonah Barrington acting as marker calls out the score for you. All this is due to a programming breakthrough that enables your computer to accurately reproduce the human voice without any hardware add-ons!
The game also incorporates a User Defined Joystick/Keys option which means that you can set your keyboard to suit you, or play with just about any make of joystick.
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Roger Kean previews Gargoyle Games follow up to Tir Na Nog . . .



It happened that, following a fateful, bloody battle against the Conachta, Cuchulainn the Great was returning home in the company of his faithful charioteer, Loeg.

Towards the end of the second day, Cuchulainn and Loeg came across a wayside inn and went inside to claim lodging and sustenance, leaving their war chariot by a strange horse-drawn carriage. While they waited for food, they were approached by Skar, a strikingly beautiful girl, who told them that she was the owner of the strange carriage, but was desperately troubled for her conveyance had developed a shattered axle. With somewhat unseemly haste, Loeg leapt to assist her and left the inn with Skar.

Cuchulainn smiled to himself and settled down to enjoy the freshly arrived trencher. After a while, he went outside to see what progress Loeg might have made, but was astonished to find no sign of Skar or Loeg.

Skar was, it seemed, a Sorceress and ally of Connachtmen, and she had seized Loeg as retribution for the Princeling's death, and taken him, body and soul, to the Secret City of Dun Darach. . . .

IN TIR NA NOG Gargoyle Games introduced us to the seven character-high hero Cuchulainn and what Greg Follis of Gar goyle calls 'Grego-Celt Mythology'. Now Cuchulainn is back again in this 'prequel' to *Tir Na Nog*.

Greg Follis and Ted Heathcote visited us at the CRASH offices to let us have a sneak look at the new graphical adventure. There are immediate similarities between *Dun Darach* and *Tir Na Nog* in graphical appearance, but the new game goes well beyond the sophistication of *Tir Na Nog*. The main object is to locate and secure the release of Loeg who is held somewhere in the city of Dun Darach. This puts the action firmly in a townscape. Ancient Celtic towns must have looked a bit boring, so Gargoyle have designed a more attractive looking, half-timbered town that oddly enough resembles Ludlow. There's even a King Street and, odder still, Number 2 (The CRASH office address) has a Wine shop on the ground floor (We are above the Victoria Wine shop). This, it appears, is quite coincidental!

Being a town, all the streets have names, and the doors to the shops and houses are numbered, which makes finding your way around the large town a relatively easy business, and the use of odd and even numbering helps enormously to overcome the sense of disorientation that changing direction sometimes caused in *Tir Na Nog*. Greg says that there are over 100 streets to roam and some 40-odd shops/rooms to enter.

Control of Cuchulainn is identical to that used in *Tir Na Nog*, but a striking difference is that you cannot be killed off in the new game, and consequently the 'thrust' function has become one of offering. This is important because although some of the other characters in the town, like shopkeepers, stick to their tasks single-mindedly, the streets are full of other large, fully animated characters with whom Cuchulainn can interact. So, you can't be killed off, but you can be mugged and robbed, you can bribe and barter, and you can even send the more friendly or reliable of characters off on an errand for you and keep track of their progress as well.

The city is divided into several quarters, each with their own character such as the entertainment quarter, the financial quarter, the professional quarter and so on. Naturally, during the game Cuchulainn requires the aid of different services, which

are more easily obtained in the appropriate quarter.

As you can buy, sell and steal, commerce is a vital factor in communicating with the other characters in the game. Here, joining a Guild may prove useful, and there are several to chose from (paying your dues of course to join) — certainly, being a member of the Thieves Guild is helpful if you get caught by the policeman stealing something because he'll let you off! And any money that Cuchulainn may acquire during the course of the game, can be banked and it accrues interest as time goes by.

As the other citizens on the street are represented by a basic male or female character, a red cursor follows them along the street under the playing area displaying their name. A panel above the playing area carries text information, while the lower panel tells you objects carried or located.

Any of the doors may be opened and the shop or rooms behind it entered. Cuchulainn stands before the door, which swings open, he goes in and the door shuts before the scene cuts to the interior. Should another person come along while the door stands open, they might well decide to enter as well. If it's a shop, goods may be bought by picking up the desired object and offering the shopkeeper the appropriate money. You could, of course, try stealing...

The currency in use is the Iridi (rainbow). This can be earned by working (if you can find a steady job), by gambling in one of the gaming houses dotted about the entertainment quarter, by selling goods at a profit or by stealing or by banking.

Dun Darach therefore, offers many levels of play and games within games; not only may it be treated as an exciting graphical adventure, but as an interactive strategy game, a try-your-luck gambling game (the Wheel of Fortune in the gaming houses can keep you at it until the Iridi run out!), and through the means of barter and banking, even a financial simulation as well. Graphically, it looks, if anything, even more exciting than *Tir Na Nog*, with bustling citizens striding about their tasks in the scrolling streets. The 'camera view angles' of *Tir Na Nog* work even better within the confines of the streets of *Dun Darach*. This should prove to be a mapping game to beat them all!

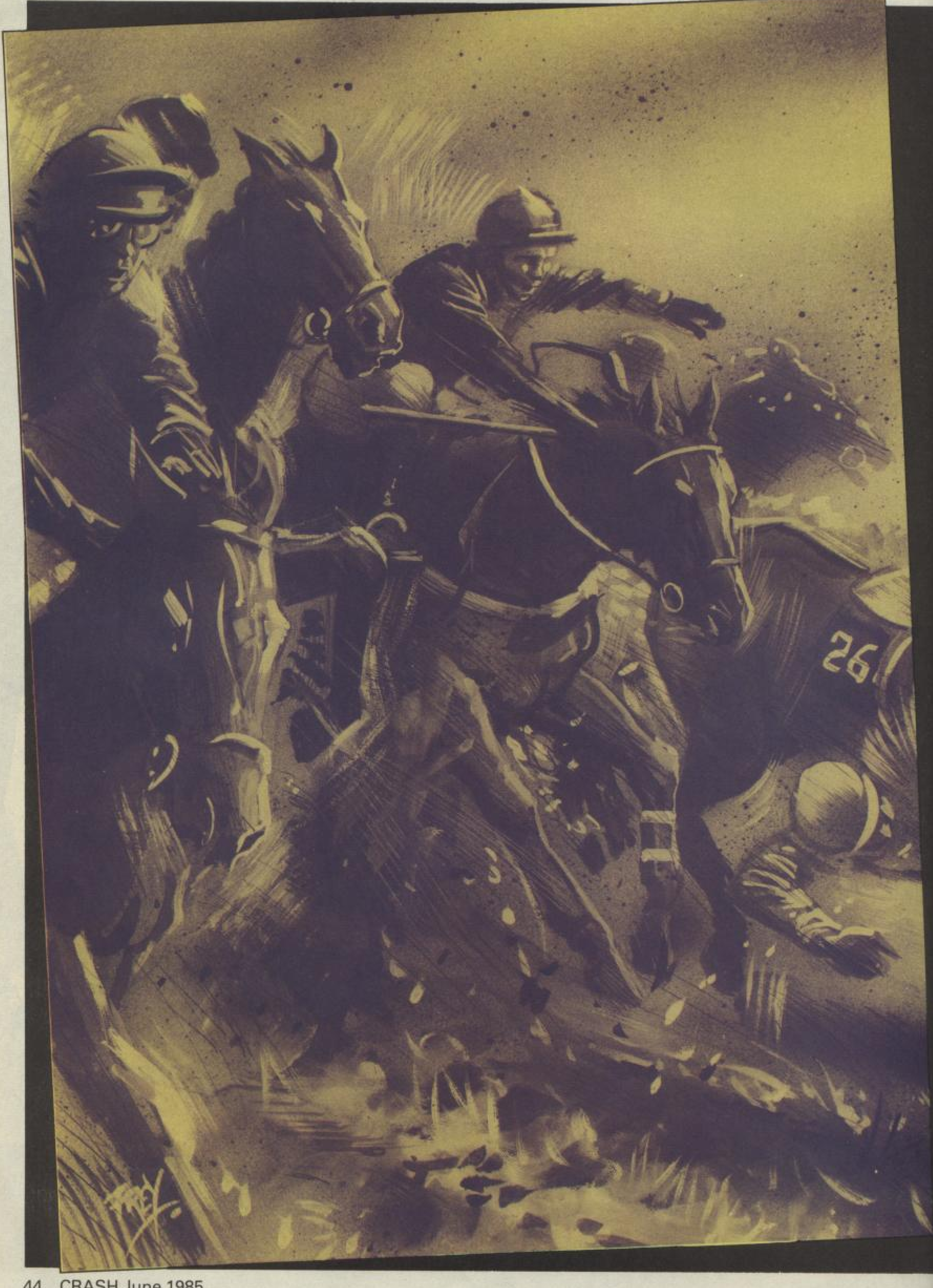
One last word — the rats are not just a 'nice little touch', uncommunicative as they may appear. . . .

Dun Darach from Gargoyle Games will be on sale from May 30 (Spectrum version), price £9.95



Ted Heathcote Greg Follis




26

BE FIRST PAST THE POST IN ELITE'S GRAND NATIONAL COMPETITION

Twenty Five Six Packs Up For Grabs!!

Under Starter's Orders? Well you're off on the trail of a whizzo Elite six-pack containing a copy of Kokotoni Wilf, Fall Guy, Airwolf, Dukes of Hazzard, 911 TS **and of course** Grand National. **The first twenty five CRASH readers past the post with their entries on 27th July will pick up a six pack, together with a presentation folder containing a set of Elite colour posters.**

Take one pound of finely sieved self-raising flour, two eggs and half a pint of milk, mix them together in a . . . oops, wrong article. I hope **Mediocre Housekeeping** *haven't got the Grand National competition on their recipe page this month. Oh dear. This is the sort of thing that happens when you stay up till two in the morning trying to eke out a miserable living as CRASH Competition Minion with freelance scribblings . . . .No here it is:*

Elite's Grand National is an arcade/strategy game based on the famous National Hunt race of the same name. First you have to choose your horse, bearing in mind the form of the available animals, ability and running style. Then you have the option to place bets on the other runners and finally you have to take the role of champion jockey and try to ride a winner!

In suitably equestrian mood, we've devised a little quiz to sort out the odds on you lot, so put your jockey's caps on, come up with the answers and pop them in the post to *GRAND NATIONAL COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB* to arrive before or on 27th July.

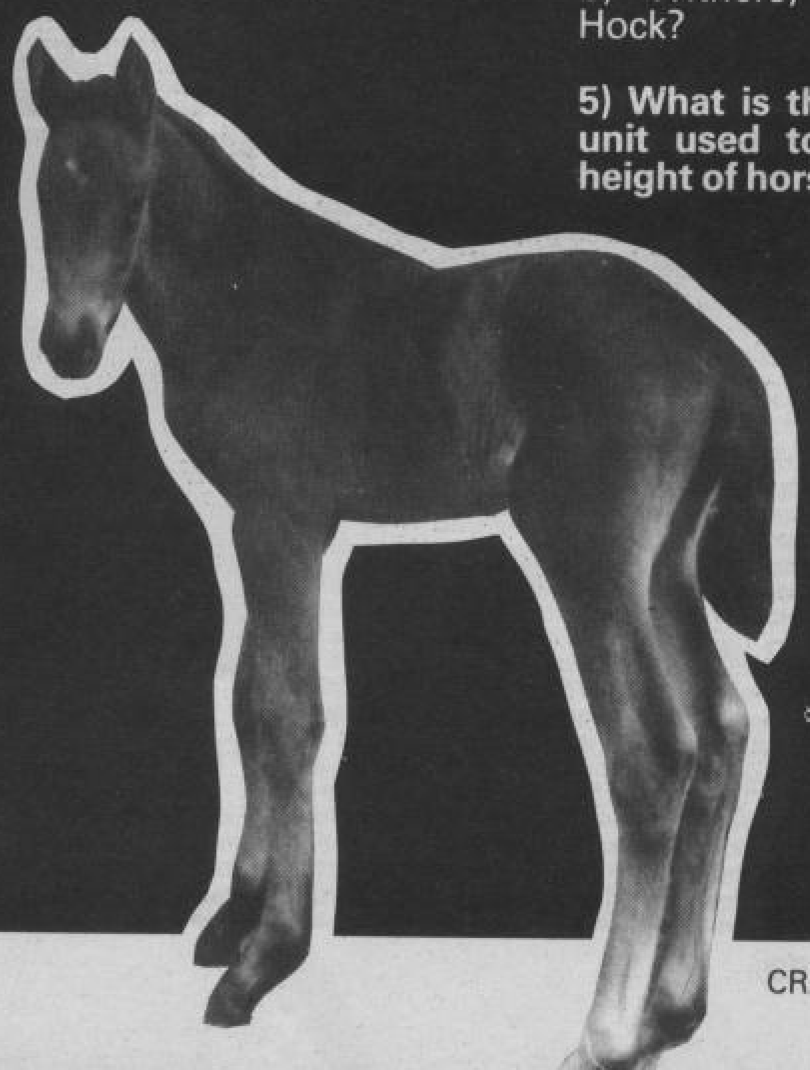
1) The Grand National is run annually at a) Manchester Race Course; b) Ascot; c) Epsom; d) Liverpool

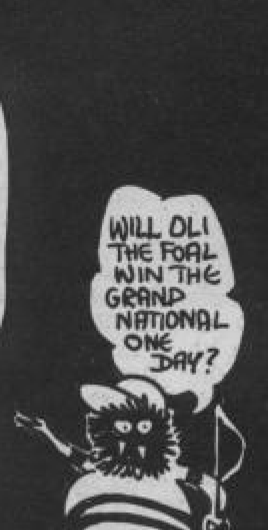
2) What is Beecher's Brook? a) a river; b) a bend on a race course; c) a fence; d) a pub

3) If you place a bet 'on the nose' with a bookmaker do you win if a) your horse comes in the first three; b) your horse comes second, third or fourth; c) your horse wins outright; d) your horse finishes the race without falling?

4) Which of the following is the odd one out: a) Fetlock; b) Withers; c) Anjou; d) Hock?

5) What is the name of the unit used to measure the height of horses?





A QUICK WORD FIRST . . .

We've had some fun this month extracting the Michael from the Software Editor. Playing on his kind, easy going temperament we handed him a copy of Firebird's *Don't Buy This* and persuaded him that it was a collection of megabrill games. At first he seemed less than convinced so we produced a few review sheets extolling it's virtues. Graeme finally clinched it by telling him that he hadn't yet learned to appreciate the more subtle aspects of some Spectrum games. Almost convinced, Spencer the Corpulent then phoned Firebird — so we all dashed upstairs to listen in on the extension . . . .

'We have a copy of your latest release here but it seems to have five games all on one tape, surely there must have been a mistake?'

'No there's no mistake, at least not are far as those games are concerned'

'Why is it called *Don't Buy This* when it seems such great value?'

'Who did you say you were?'

'Jeremy Spencer from from CRASH'

'Are you serious?'

'What? about being from CRASH?'

'No, about the games'

'Well of course I am.

'Are you the new Software Editor? The guy that used to sell yellow wellingtons for horses, the ones you filled with water?'

'Well . . .er . . .yes'

'. . .and now you own an Amstrad and a lamb that answers to the name of Ernie?'

'Yes'

'. . . and a dog that chews empty wine bottles?'

'well yes but what . . . .'

'. . . you are serious!'

'Yes of course but why call the cassette "Don't Buy This"?'

'It wasn't meant to be called Don't Buy This *but the type-setters made a mistake.'*

'What was it meant to be called?'

'Oh it's been called all sorts of things, lots and lots of different names but since we've had so many inlay cards printed it seemed to stick you see.'

'Fair enough I suppose, perhaps you could give me the names of the authors? I can't find any credits.'

'Too right, John . . . they said they wanted to be kept out of it, out of the limelight I mean, and for that matter perhaps you could keep Firebird's name out as well . . . please.'

'Well that's very modest of you.'

'All part of the image you know.' . . . BRRRRRRRRRRRRRR'

DON'T BUY THIS

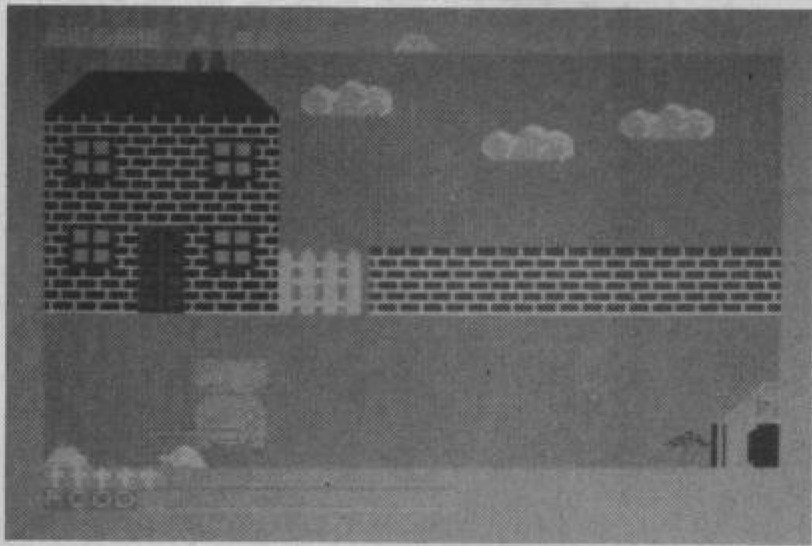
Producer: Firebird
Memory Required: **16/48k**
Retail price: **£2.50 — it's a steal!**
Language: **megabasic (it's a very good basic though)**
Authors: **Anon**

Race Ace is a very straightforward racing game, in fact it's simplicity is one of its strongest features because you can get stuck in straight away. The player steers one of nine little cars round a fixed track, the others being controlled by the computer. Any one of 250 speeds can be selected for a race of four or more laps. At first I thought the game a little limiting because it only has one track until I realised that by using the simple trick of going backwards a completely new race could be run — unfortunately the other cars persisted in going the wrong way. The graphics are very simple but this is necessary in order to follow the fast action that the game provides. A particularly admirable feature is that no matter what happens to the player's car, like colliding with another car, or with the kerb, or indeed with anything, it suffers no damage. This means that since your car can't be damaged you won't have to keep going back to the start as other race games tend to insist you do. Once your car pulls out into the lead then the race is over: this neatly avoids the tedium you encounter in games like *Full Throttle* of having to stay ahead once you are.

FIDO

This game requires the player to position the dog, Fido, so that when he sits down and wags his tail he batters little moles to death. The moles keep popping up at the bottom of the screen. This may sound easy to do but you must be careful not to exhaust the little pooch, his energy decreases as he moves across the screen so you must guide him to his feed bowl to boost his energy. The game gets harder still when you consider the action of the birds, they just fly across the screen but because Fido is larger when seated than when standing the birds can crash into his head and kill him. To avoid this awful end Fido can duck (another sort of bird), you do this by making him stand up. To make the game harder still the program seems to have been written so that every now and then Fido dies for absolutely no apparent reason - very realistic.

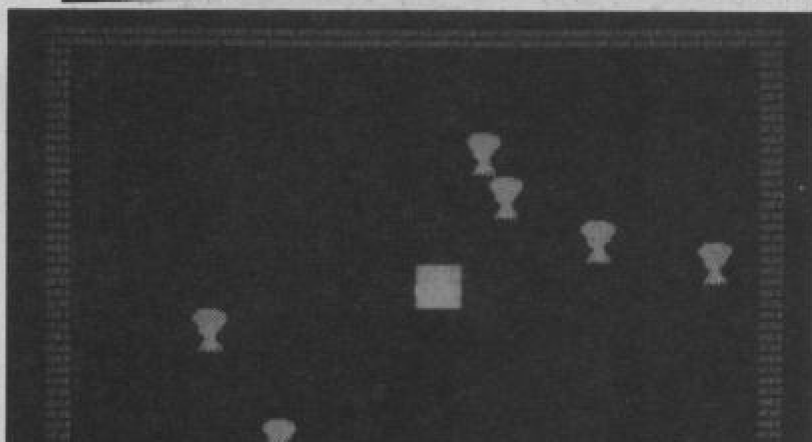
FIDO is a dog with an Impossible Mission, side swiping the naughty moles with that rigid tail of his.



WEASEL WILLY

This has simply got to be the best version of *Weasel Willy* available. The object of the game is to guide what looks like a bear round the screen without touching the trees, which are cunningly placed at random. Should you collide with any object then a superb message comes up saying 'YOU'VE BLOWN IT' and you lose a life. If you manage to steer the bear round the park then just when you least expect it the screen will re-draw with more trees all in different places. You continue in this way until you have exhausted all of your lives, which is inevitable because nobody is that good. The program has some neat touches, two in fact. The first is a league table and the second lets the player re-define the keys, this feature is cleverly offered every time you re-start the game just in case you feel like a change. I particularly liked the way the bear flashes. What happened to the Weasel?

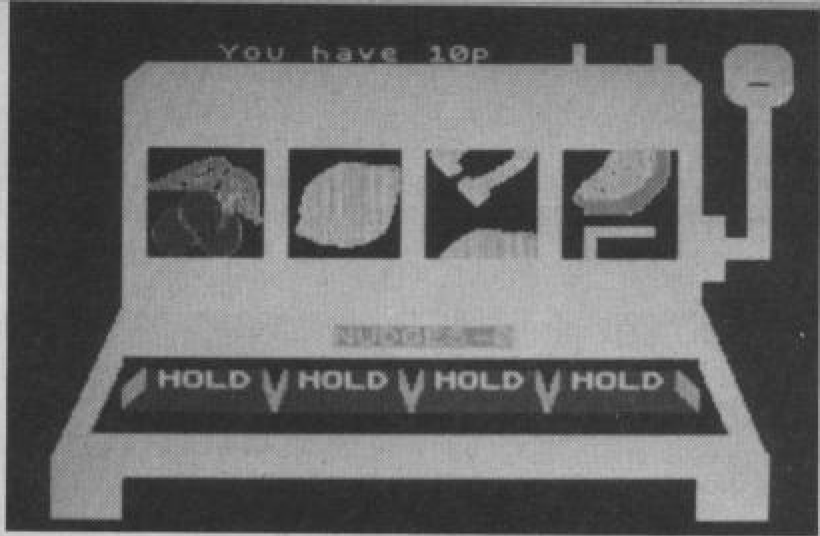
Best Graphics of the Year award goes to WEASEL WILLY. The mushroom shaped things are actually trees and the square in the middle is Willy. Unfortunately the camera caught him just as he was flashing, otherwise you would see an elegant character . . .



FIDO 2

Fido 2 is probably better known under its other title of *Puppy Power*. The gameplay in this powerful follow up to the immensely successful *Fido* remains the same, ie to batter the moles with your tail, this version is a great deal harder though, as befits a sequel. Firstly, although the programmers have left the

diminishing energy bar in, they have cunningly left the food bowl out so Fido starves to death. This game has more screens than before: rather than just a simple street scene we now have a cave and beach scene as well. What makes *Fido 2* such a winner is the way Fido is chased by little thingies If they catch him while he trying to batter a mole then he will die. The pursuing objects vary from screen to screen; in the first screen we have a purple bust of a chap with a very long nose, the other screens have flowering scotch thistles, ashtrays with smoking cigarettes, smashed up sandcastles and finally toy pistols. All of the backdrops have doors of some kind, but the amazing thing is that no matter what you do you won't be able to get through any of them. Should you find the game too hard the programmers have built in a feature which allows you to flick through the five screens and admire the graphics.



If you're unhappy with the 'nudges', just break into BASIC and edit line number 880 and change the random number in brackets to whatever you would rather have! If you reckon the machine hasn't given you a nudge for some time, just break in and type GOTO 880 — CRASH, the mag that gives playing tips with your captions!

FRUIT MACHINE

Everybody knows how to play this so perhaps I should point out the features that can be used to advance your enjoyment of the game. Firstly there is a an accountant telling you how much money you have left out of your original pound. Every so often, about once in a thousand pulls, you can take advantage of the Nudge feature, the hold facility is offered a little more frequently. On winning you will be asked if you want to gamble, another screen puts this offer to reality and two numbers will flash, the first slightly higher than your initial win, the second will be nothing, that's what I call gambling. One problem with many fruit machine programs is the sheer speed at which everything happens, not with this game, this is nice and ever so slow, the player can sit back and be sure of missing nothing.

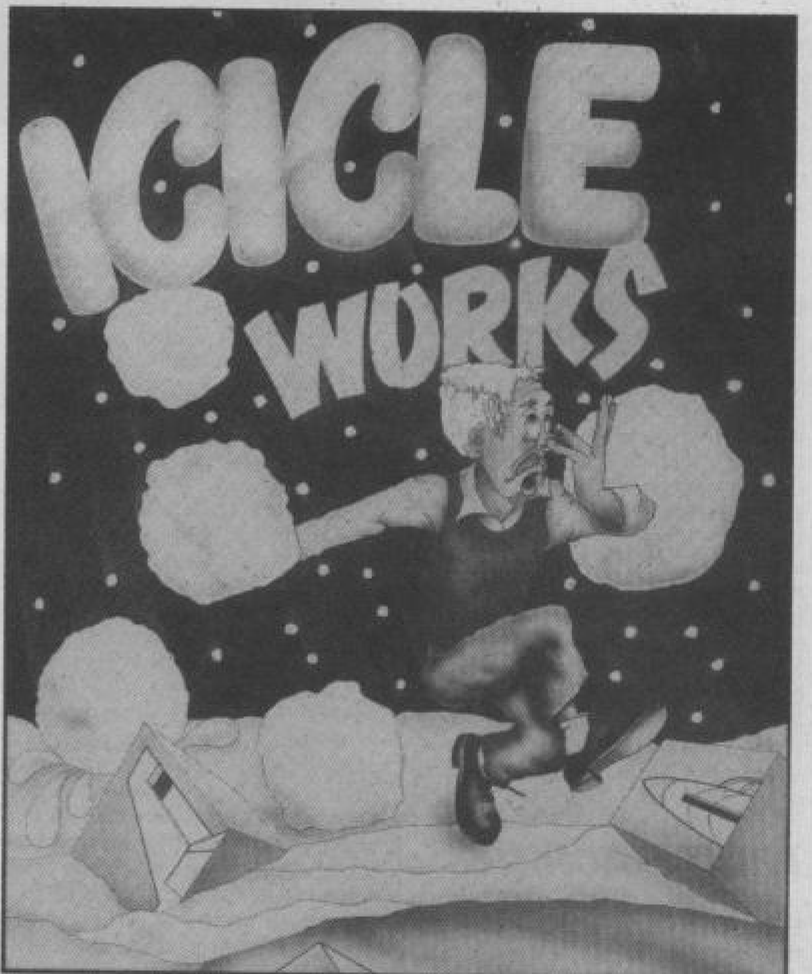
COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/M left/right X to brake but it rather depends on the game
Joystick: none on one; others allowed the Kempston but didn't say why
Keyboard: ours had funny little rubber keys that squished up when you pressed them this tended to make rapid game play difficult but that didn't matter since rapid game play isn't required
Use of colour: some of them had colour and those colours looked very . . . coloured
Graphics: fairly uncomplicated some were actually very uncomplicated
Sound: I don't think there was any, apart from the odd bleep
Skill levels: not so much skill as persistence
Lives: by and large, taken as a whole, there were too many
General rating: I'm told it's great.

Use of computer:	**(6)%**
Graphics	**(17)%**
Playability	**(10)%**
Getting started	**(27)%**
Addictive qualities	**(76)%**
Value for money	**(700)%**
Overall	**(39.333333)%**

N.B. *Using the old CRASH system of having the overall figure as a strict average of the other marks, it looks much better that way. One other point I feel that I should raise is that The Headitor tells me that because this package has five games all on one tape tradition demands that the percentages must be given in brackets. This seems a shame because readers might get the idea that this means they are minus points, but that would be silly as only accountants put negative numbers in brackets and boring accountants don't read CRASH anyway, do they? (Answers, on an postcard please, to J Spencer CRASH)*

ICICLE WORKS



Producer: Statesoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: R Parratt

Boulder Dash was one of those games with unpromising graphics but a highly addictive scenario. *Icicle Works* is similar. Whereas in the former game you guided Rockford through a series of rooms collecting gems from under threatening boulders and dodging the variously released meanies, in this game your man has to collect the various parts of toys buried in the earth and surrounded by snowballs.

There are 13 very different rooms to burrow through, and as each square of 'earth' is removed, any snowballs above it will fall down, adjusting themselves to the new level. Snowballs will crush your man if they fall on him, but he can hold them on his head. In some rooms the toy parts are immediately visible, but in others there are green boxes with ? marks on them. Snowballs must be made to pass through these before those hiding toy parts will release them. As the toy is built up, its component parts appear in the status panel on the left. All this is done against a very tight clock. Once all the parts have been collected, it is time to rush for the nearest of several exits which have been locked up until the toy is completed, which lets you into another room and another task.

If the clock doesn't seem a severe enough task master, there are some nasties about; Polar Bears eat you, but can be squashed with a snowball or drowned in melting ice water; Penguins also kill on contact, but more usefully turn into toy parts if they are squashed under a snowball. Melting ice water is fatally chilly, and expands throughout a screen rapidly if it is accidentally freed from its confinement.

Once a room has been completed, the room may be used as a fast, safe route through to other rooms. The time limit varies from room to room, depending on the complexity of the task in hand.

Collecting aeroplane parts in ICICLE WORKS.



CRITICISM

● *'Icicle Works* owes a lot to *Boulder Dash*, although there are quite a few changes to the game idea, but the principle remains much the same. Looking at the loading screen I thought this was going to be a Pengo type game and indeed there is an element of that — the boulders have turned into snowballs. First off, I thought this game was not much good in comparison to *Boulder Dash*, because the graphics handling is much slower and jerkier. The game itself is much more difficult and I found it daunting at first because there are so many parts to collect to complete an object and so little time to do it in, and once you get going you can't stop because the time constantly ticks on through each screen as you progress through the game — it's a nightmare! An interesting game but I don't know whether it will appeal to everyone. I liked it up to a certain point, but not quite as much as Boulder Dash.'

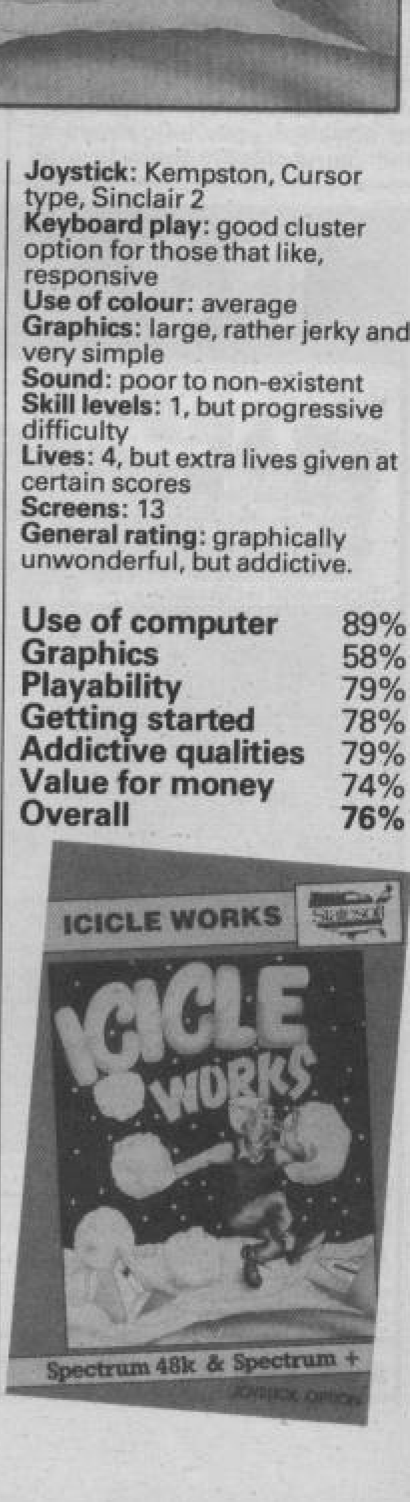
● 'Icicle Works *plays very much like* Boulder Dash *in as much as the snowballs behave just like the boulders, and the nasties move around in little circles if you annoy them. The two things that really annoy me are the sound 9or lack of it) and the scrolling screen which moves around too much and makes the graphics look jerky. I enjoyed playing* Icicle Works *but sound would have made it a lot better.'*

● 'After looking at the beginning of *Icicle Works* a yawn had to be suppressed — rough movement of graphics and fairly simple ones at that — it's just not on! But it was, for this game is cleverly designed. Okay, the piccies aren't over brill, but the game itself is great. Getting all the bits can prove a difficult and addictive task, especially when you run the risk of completely trapping the man. A highly playable game which is the most uncommercial goodie I've seen recently.'

COMMENTS

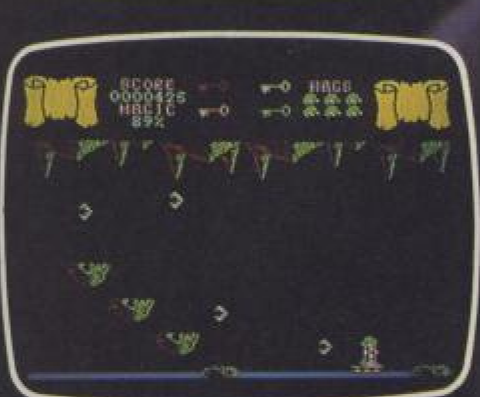
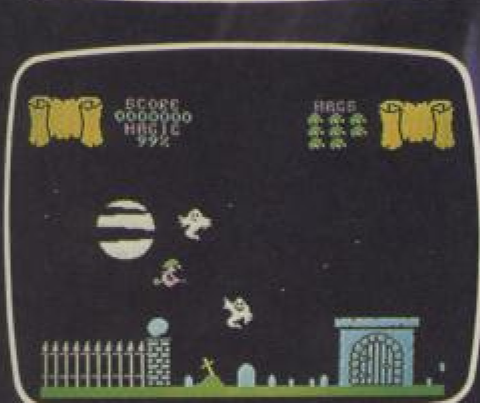
Control keys: user definable, but preset E/X up/down, S/D left/right, CAPS plus direction to push
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor type, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: good cluster option for those that like, responsive
Use of colour: average
Graphics: large, rather jerky and very simple
Sound: poor to non-existent
Skill levels: 1, but progressive difficulty
Lives: 4, but extra lives given at certain scores
Screens: 13
General rating: graphically unwonderful, but addictive.

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	58%
Playability	79%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	74%
Overall	**76%**

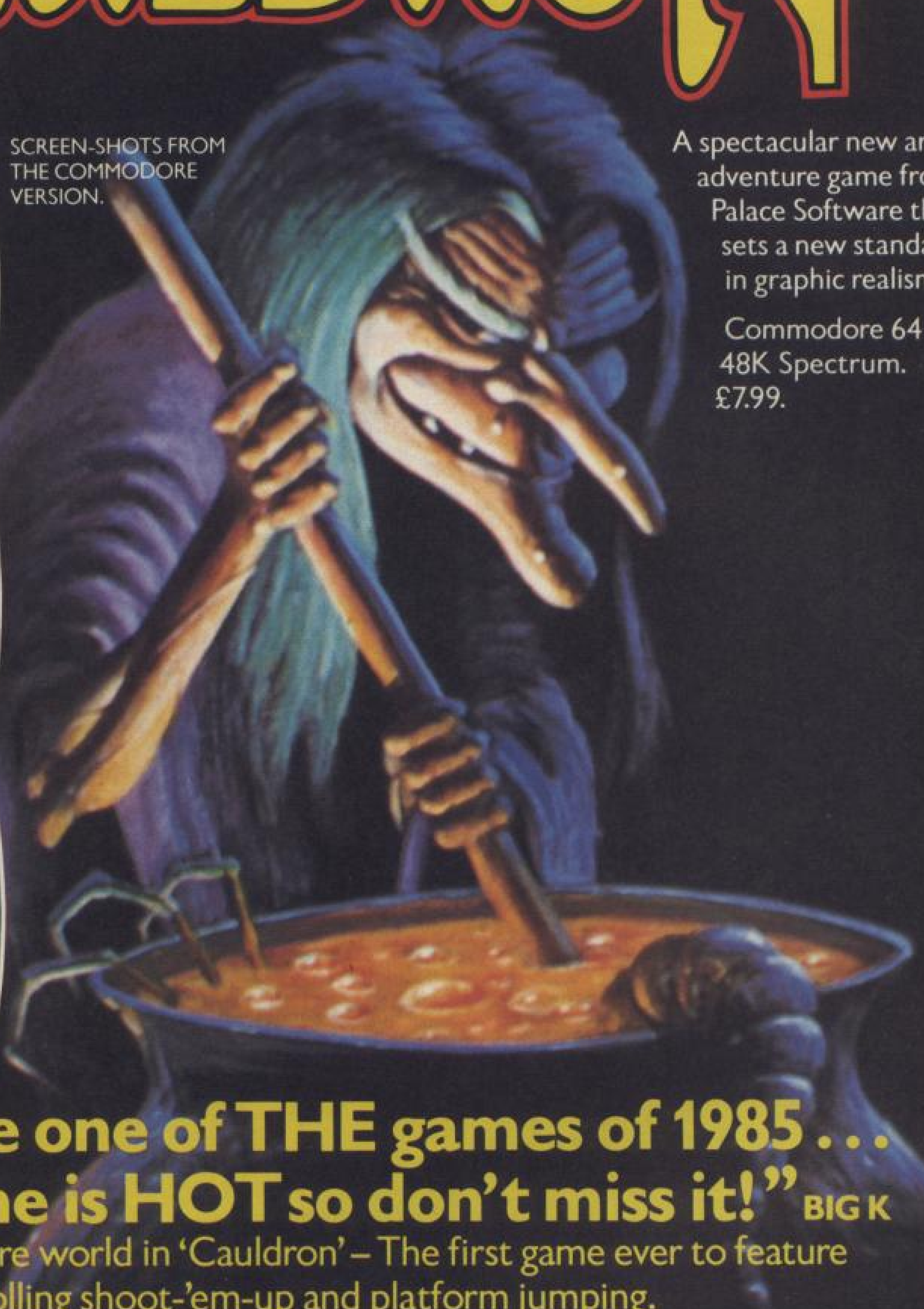


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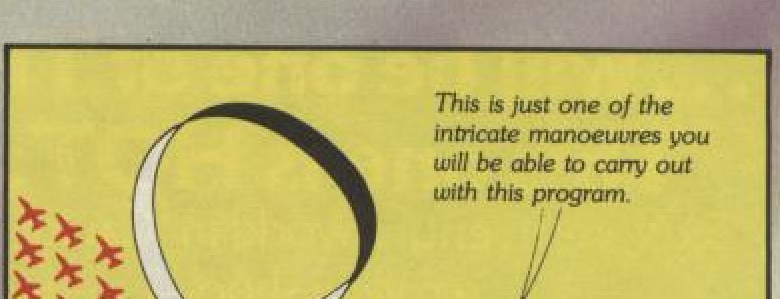
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THIS IS PART ONE OF THE MAP — CUT ALONG THE EDGES AND JOIN TO PART TWO ON PAGES 106 + 107




START
YOUR QUEST
TRAVEL THE VAST COMPLEX OF ROOMS IN THE RUINED CASTLE
FIND THE CHOSEN CHARMS TO GIVE TO MELKHIOR TO BREW A CURE FOR YOUR AWFUL PREDICAMENT WHICH TURNS YOU INTO A WEREWULF IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...
AVOID THE HORRORS
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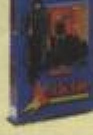
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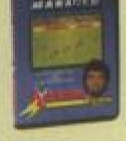
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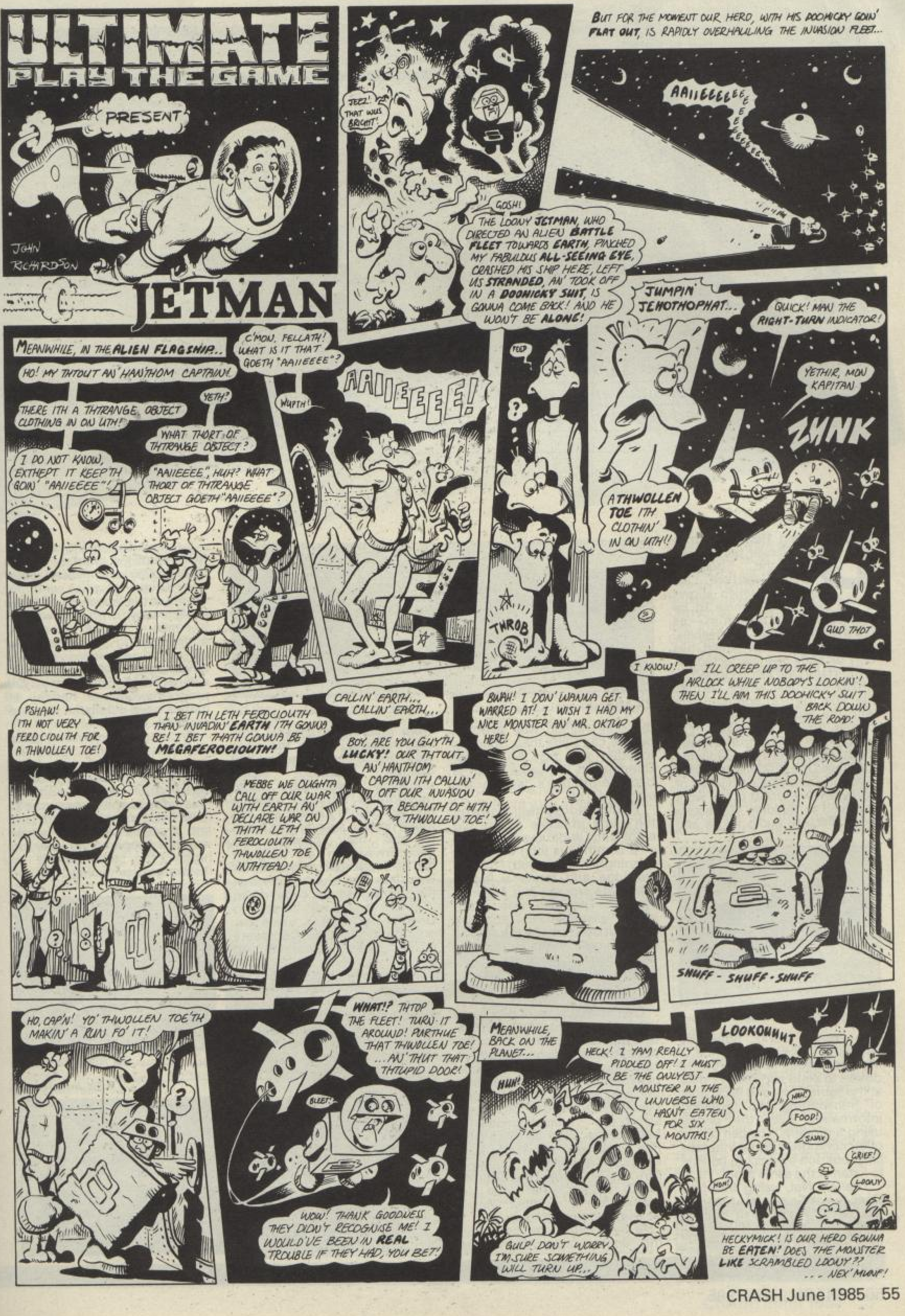
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ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME
PRESENT
JOHN RICHARDSON
JETMAN
JEEZ! THAT WAS BRIGHT!
GOSH!
THE LOONY JETMAN, WHO DIRECTED AN ALIEN BATTLE FLEET TOWARDS EARTH, PINCHED MY FABULOUS ALL-SEEING EYE, CRASHED HIS SHIP HERE, LEFT US STRANDED, AN' TOOK OFF IN A DOOHICKY SUIT, IS GONNA COME BACK! AND HE WON'T BE ALONE!
BUT FOR THE MOMENT OUR HERO, WITH HIS DOOHICKY GOIN' FLAT OUT, IS RAPIDLY OVERHAULING THE INVASION FLEET...
AAIIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
MEANWHILE, IN THE ALIEN FLAGSHIP...
HO! MY THTOUT AN' HANTHOM CAPTAIN!
YETH?
THERE ITH A THTRANGE OBJECT CLOTHING IN ON UTH!
WHAT THORT OF THTRANGE OBJECT?
I DO NOT KNOW, EXTHEPT IT KEEPTH GOIN' "AAIIEEEE"!
"AAIIEEEE", HUH? WHAT THORT OF THTRANGE OBJECT GOETH "AAIIEEEE"?
C'MON, FELLATH! WHAT IS IT THAT GOETH "AAIIEEEE"?
WUPTH!
AAIIEEEE!
FEEP
?
JUMPIN' JEHOTHOPHAT...
A THWOLLEN TOE ITH CLOTHIN' IN ON UTH!!
THROB
QUICK! MAN THE RIGHT-TURN INDICATOR!
YETHIR, MON KAPITAN
ZYNK
GUD THOT
PSHAW! ITH NOT VERY FEROCIOUTH FOR A THWOLLEN TOE!
I BET ITH LETH FEROCIOUTH THAN INVADIN' EARTH ITH GONNA BE! I BET THATH GONNA BE MEGAFEROCIOUTH!
CALLIN' EARTH... CALLIN' EARTH...
BOY, ARE YOU GUYTH LUCKY! OUR THTOUT AN' HANTHOM CAPTAIN ITH CALLIN' OFF OUR INVASION BECAUTH OF HITH THWOLLEN TOE!
MEBBE WE OUGHTA CALL OFF OUR WAR WITH EARTH AN' DECLARE WAR ON THITH LETH FEROCIOUTH THWOLLEN TOE INTHTEAD!
?
BWAH! I DON' WANNA GET WARRED AT! I WISH I HAD MY NICE MONSTER AN' MR. OKTUP HERE!
I KNOW!
I'LL CREEP UP TO THE AIRLOCK WHILE NOBODY'S LOOKIN'! THEN I'LL AIM THIS DOOHICKY SUIT BACK DOWN THE ROAD!
SHUFF - SHUFF - SHUFF
HO, CAP'N! YO' THWOLLEN TOE'TH MAKIN' A RUN FO' IT!
?
WHAT!? THTOP THE FLEET! TURN IT AROUND! PURTHUE THAT THWOLLEN TOE! ...AN' THUT THAT THTUPID DOOR!
BLEEP!
WOW! THANK GOODNESS THEY DIDN'T RECOGNISE ME! I WOULD'VE BEEN IN REAL TROUBLE IF THEY HAD, YOU BET!
MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE PLANET...
HUH!
HECK! I YAM REALLY PIDDLED OFF! I MUST BE THE ONLYEST MONSTER IN THE UNIVERSE WHO HASN'T EATEN FOR SIX MONTHS!
GULP! DON'T WORRY I'M SURE SOMETHING WILL TURN UP...
LOOKOUUUT.
FOOD!
GRIEF!
LOONY
HECKYMICK! IS OUR HERO GONNA BE EATEN! DOES THE MONSTER LIKE SCRAMBLED LOONY?? ... NEX' MUNF!



THE SINCLAIR STORY

part three

Nineteen eighty three was quite a year for Clive Sinclair. It began with his company passing the million-computer-sales mark and by the end of the year he had been knighted, his flat screen pocket TV had been launched and orders for the 'Quantum Leap' computer were about to be sought.

During 1983 the family of Sinclair peripherals for the Spectrum grew. Interface One arrived, which allows up to eight Microdrives to be connected to the Spectrum — as did the Microdrives themselves, a cunning concept which has only recently been perfected.

Interface One incorporated an RS232 interface, which permits the Spectrum to communicate with the outside world — to a printer, down a phone line or to up to 64 other Spectrums linked together in a network. Sadly the Interface One RS232 was a bit of a bodge, involving a trivial bit of hardware with most of the work involved in building characters from discrete audio clicks and vice versa being done by software. A proper RS232 interface needs to be hardware driven to send and receive data at the same time, and is capable of transmitting and receiving information over the phone using a modem. You can talk to other computers via an Interface One, but don't expect to be able to listen at the same time!



ZX Interface 1

The ZX Net, using Interface Ones to link Spectrums together has never really been utilised fully. The potential for multi-user games is definitely here — the only reason why a dozen people can't link their Speccies together and play Multi User Dungeon in the same room is because no-one's written the software. Yet.



ZX Microdrives

The Microdrive itself works on the same principle as the old eight track audio tape cartridge — a continuous loop of tape is cunningly packaged in a cartridge and forms a floppy tape data storage and retrieval system. The idea was good, made possible in such a miniaturised form by the advent of high-quality magnetic tape developed for video recorders. But Microdrives rapidly acquired a reputation for unreliability.

One main source of problems lies in the fact that the tape loop is expected to do a standing start. Access a file on Microdrive cartridge and the poor little beast attempts to start reading immediately and shift the tape past the read head at the correct speed instantaneously. Microdrives used on ICL's One Per Desk machine (and, it is rumoured, on later QL's) have a run up and run down time, which allows the tape to accelerate to running speed before reading commences.

At five pounds per cartridge, the floppy tapes themselves were painfully expensive until very recently, when the price was halved. Despite the fact that Sinclair Research would duplicate software onto microdrives for free, software houses couldn't really see too much point in spending so much to put their games onto Microdrive when a 48K program can be duplicated on cassette for less than 50p a unit. Now that the cartridges have come down in price — and will be sold to One Per Desk and QL users too, no doubt, Spectrum software cold start appearing on Microdrive.

Incidentally, there are two types of Microdrive cartridge — those made more recently are much more reliable in use than their predecessors, and have the words 'Regd Design App' embossed on their edge. So now you know what to look for!

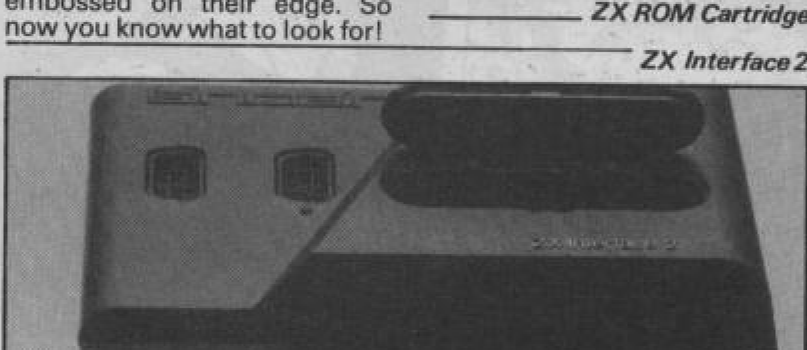
Interface Two, the joystick and ROM cartridge interface, which sells for £20 was released rather late. Given its price and the timing of the launch it was never likely to catch on in a big way. All it contains is one elementary address decoding chip and a few wires, and while it does offer the advantage of allowing you to use a ROM cartridge to run programs, only a handful of games have ever been released on ROM.

Once again, software houses couldn't see the point of investing in expensive cartridges. Cartridge-based versions of cassette software invariably cost the consumer at least twice as much as the tape and it seems clear that people weren't prepared to pay so highly for the benefit of instantaneous loading.



ZX ROM Cartridge

ZX Interface 2





Anyway, Interface Zero was dreamt up by one enterprising fellow of our acquaintance who wrote a magazine article explaining how to hard-wire a joystick into the guts of a Spectrum. The total cost of Interface Zero was about 0.5p's worth of electrickery used to warm up a soldering iron and about an inch of solder to make the joints. Somehow Sinclair Research was left behind in the race to interface joysticks to the Spectrum.

By the time the Spectrum was launched, a goodly number of firms were already making a healthy living supplying software and hardware add-ons for the ZX80 and ZX81. Naturally, they jumped on the Spectrum bandwaggon as soon as it started rolling and joystick interfaces of varying degrees of sophistication appeared soon after the machine's launch. They were soon followed by alternatives to the standard issue 'dead flesh' keyboard. A few sleepless nights were caused in add-on keyboard circles when Interface One appeared, as most independent keyboards had to be modified with a saw before they could be connected, and no doubt a few more anxious moments were caused by the advent of the Spectrum+ just before Christmas last year.

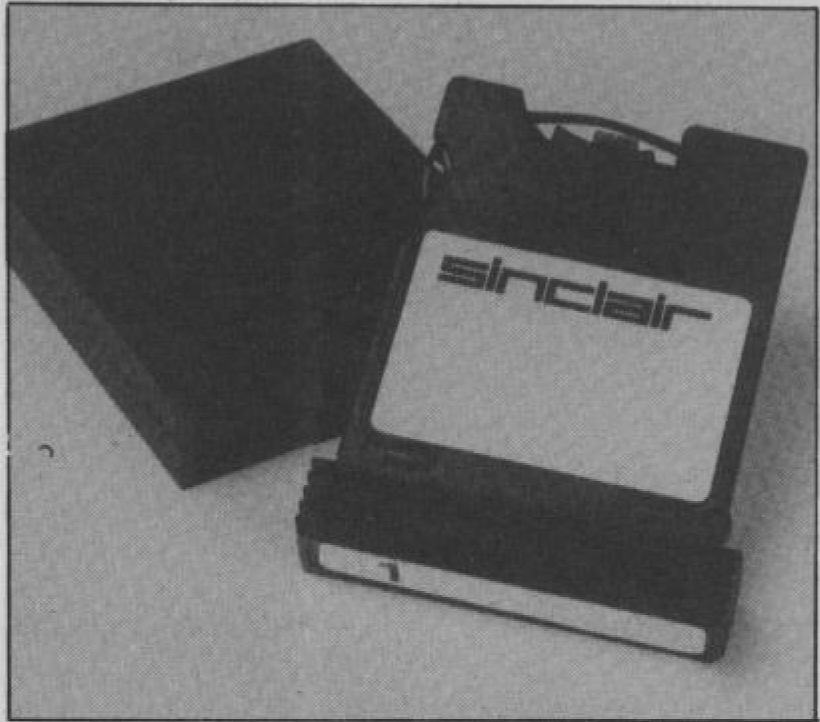
For some £20, the Spectrum+ keyboard can be bought from Sinclair as an upgrade kit, and for the price it's not a bad deal. As a keyboard, however, it's not ideal for every purpose, and there will still be room for independent keyboard manufacturers for a while yet. All Spectrums sold from now on will be Spectrum+s, however, and the add-on keyboard market is a finite market.

The peripheral market grouped round the Spectrum is still healthy overall, with a variety of manufacturers providing a wide range of add-ons which improve on the basic machine. Sound synthesisers, programmable joystick interfaces, sound samplers, printer and monitor interfaces as well as disc drives are all available and there seems to be no shortage of ideas.

Throughout 1983 and 1984 Spectrum sales boomed and software houses catering for games playing Spectrum owners 'never had it so good' to borrow a phrase. Early in 1984, too early in many people's opinion, the QL was launched. After four years committed to the Z80 family of processors, Sinclair moved towards the 68000 family and the jump involved, together with the overly ambitious launch schedule for the QL led to a flurry of bad publicity for Sir Clive. Fully working QL's, from stock, have only recently become available.

The first half of this year has not been overly kind to Sir Clive Sinclair or to a number of companies active in the Spectrum hardware and software market. After the Christmas boom in sales, occasioned partly by the six-pack offer and partly by the £50 price cut, tens of thousands of Spectrums were left in the shops. More than a few retailers felt they had been given a raw deal when they found their stocks of 'old' rubber keyed Spectrums were unlikely to sell very easily now the Spectrum+ shared the same retail price.

ZX Microdrive Cartridges



Both hardware and software houses have disappeared since Christmas, dashing lemming-like into liquidation. Bug-Byte, Quicksilva and Prism, three of the industry's mainstays have effectively disappeared (Quicksilva being taken over by Argus Press), and a whole host of lesser stars in the Spectrum support market have recently come crashing down.

The City seems to have lost confidence in the home computer market as a whole, Sinclair shares have fallen in value, Sinclair Research has cancelled production of the Spectrum because it's holding stocks apparently in the tens of thousands and the C5, launched this year by Sinclair Vehicles, has also had production cut right back.

A temporary set-back for Sir Clive? Well, he's seeking capital to set up a factory making wafer scale integration chips, has plans to produce a complete range of electric vehicles before the end of the century and should be launching a new portable computer in the not too distant future.

Fear not. The Spectrum is far from dead — expect to see a Spectrum-based portable machine with a flat screen display, battery power pack and wafer drive memory before too long. Codenamed 'Pandora', the Spectrum Portable project could see a lot of exciting things coming out of the box!

Next month, by way of digression, we'll take a gentle break from computers with a look at the C5 and Sinclair's flat screen TV. Hang on in there Sir Clive!



The Post Office must be thrilled with CRASH this month, since the postbag has almost trebbled in angry response to the letter sent in by Mark Roberts (issue 15) attacking the Spectrum in favour of the CBM64. I've also received quite a bit of mail from CRASH readers who happen (and there are a surprising amount it would seem) to also own CBM64s, complaining about the anti-Spectrum stance taken by our sister publication ZZAP! 64. This has obviously been seen as some sort of betrayal — and all I can say to that is — you're right. Disgusting behaviour. The ZZAP! team have been suitably reprimanded and new gallows space at the Ludlow gibbet approved for them should there be much more of it. Whilst I am on the subject, I got to see a few of the letters sent in by readers to ZZAP! and one, from Andrew C Rawstron, said that ZZAP! is much better than CRASH because it doesn't have 'Mangy Mangram' writing for it. Being both a Spectrum and a CBM64 owner doesn't give you the right to be plain nasty! *(Ignore him Andrew you're right! -RC).*

I'll include a few of the less vituperative (there's a long word — the sort Candy wouldn't understand) letters answering Mark Roberts, but too many would be boring.

I'm now getting input from another area than the Post Office, namely MICRONET. Yes folks, CRASH has logged on at long last and our thermal printer is pouring paper all over the floor. See the Micronet sub-niche in Tech Niche for more details. Letters originating from Micronet appearing on these hallowed pages will be accompanied by a suitable logo so you'll know the miserly correspondent wouldn't afford the 17p stamp (and you can't enclose readies for the Mangram Fund via Micronet). Should anyone wish to write via Micronet, the CRASH Mailbox number is 105845851. Money for the CRASH tea kitty fund or Save a Mangram Fund, should be sent under separate cover via old fashioned steam PO system.

For Letter of the month, I've picked this one from Paul Rhodes, for his interesting comments on fast loaders, sensible attitude towards Alien 8/Knightlore, and some observations on Design Designoterica . . . .

SOME THOUGHTS IN PASSING

Dear Lloyd,
I read with some interest your letters pages in CRASH issue 16, particularly the points made about fast loaders. The loader used by Ultimate, Ocean and many others is 'Speedlock' by DJL Software & D Aubrey Jones (according to the copyright notice, which also gives a phone number — for successful hackers to call and gloat perhaps)? Even though this is probably the best protected loader on the market at present (Incentive's loader comes close but in a different way), it is easy to break into any Speedlocked program in a couple of hours once a technique has been worked out.

With regard to loading problems, it may interest you to know that 'Speedlock' is designed to do a JP O (equivalent to RAND USR 0) if it detects a high level of 'noise' on the tape, which could be caused by a poor tape-to-tape copy, but can also result from high volume settings on an original tape played on a poor cassette player (or one with dirty or misaligned heads, or unusually high output levels). Hence the improvement that may be observed by reducing the volume level or loading through the MIC socket. This itself is bad enough, but 'Speedlock' adds insult to injury by waiting until the program has finished loading before it crashes, even though it decides to do so at a very early stage. Whilst pirates deserve everything they get, this blatant placing of questionable increases in profit over customers' ability to LOAD the games can do no good to the reputations of the companies involved.

Which brings me to *Alien 8*. Did the people complaining about the game's similarity to *Knight Lore* really think that Ultimate would spend all the time and and money that Filmation must have taken up just for one game? Perhaps they ought to have released something different before *Alien 8*, but this is only the second such program and it bears many improvements over *Knight Lore*, and it has a completely different map. For a comparison, look at all the platform games which Bug-Byte relied on for so long, or at all the Space Invaders/Galaxians clones (the recent release *Moon Cresta* is about as original as an early BBC Micro game). No-one complained that *Jet Set Willy* was too much like *Manic Miner*, did they?

And finally, on the rather more trivial subject of Design Design/Crystal hi-score tables, Mr Chattfield is merely scraping the surface of these programs. *IOTBS* and *Dark Star* each have 30 or so words which they recognise and reply to, including various swear words, computer celebrities (and indeed mega-stars such as T Bridge), magazines, games and the like, and some in-jokes for those who have hacked their other programs (try typing 'Lavinia' into *IOTBS*). Other things to try are: (on *IOTBS*) 'Marvin', 'Kickhaha', 'Dave', 'Cheesecake', (on *Dark Star*) 'MSX', 'C64', 'Ultimate', 'C&VG'.

Various bits of jokey and offensive text is scattered throughout the programs (eg over the systems variable — very annoying)! Most are listed in *Spectacle* (but not *Halls* for obvious reasons if you've seen it). Two of the names in the *IOTBS* hi-score table you haven't mentioned are Muad'Dib and Sleepery Jeem, the former is the central character in *Dune*, the latter an obscure pronounciation of the Stainless Steel Rat's other nickname from Harry Harrison's books.
Paul Rhodes, Luton, Beds.

On 'Speedlock', the fact that it lets a program it already 'knows' won't be allowed to load properly to continue doing so until the end, smacks heavily of a petulant cynicism, doesn't it? It's the kind of thing that sounds like fun when you think it up — a kind of cruel joke — but not very sensible in the long run.

Your points about Alien 8 *sound very sensible to me, and underline the problems a company like Ultimate must have — they're never allowed a slip in the public eye (not that I think* Alien 8 *was a slip).*

And talking about Design Design — where are you guys? Gwaham, the Wookie and Co seem to have gone human beingly quiet of late. Come in Design Design, your time is up.

Digging around the references is becoming a sub-cult, I can see — more illumination on Design Design . . .
LM

EXCESSIVE FINGERS

Dear Lloyd,
In response to the letter concerning the weird Design Design hi-score tables, the game *Warlock of Firetop Mountain* gives responses to 'Spectrum' and a row of full stops. Also, try pressing CAPS SHIFT and BREAK. The table also contains song titles such as 'Scarborough Fair', a Mike Oldfield number and 'To the Unknown Man' (you know, the Vangelis score the BBC play at inappropriate times when they're trying to be cultural). But can anyone tell me who recorded 'Five Miles Out'?

One more word on *Warlock*, don't buy it unless you have an excessive number of fingers.
David Blair, Inverclyde, Scotland

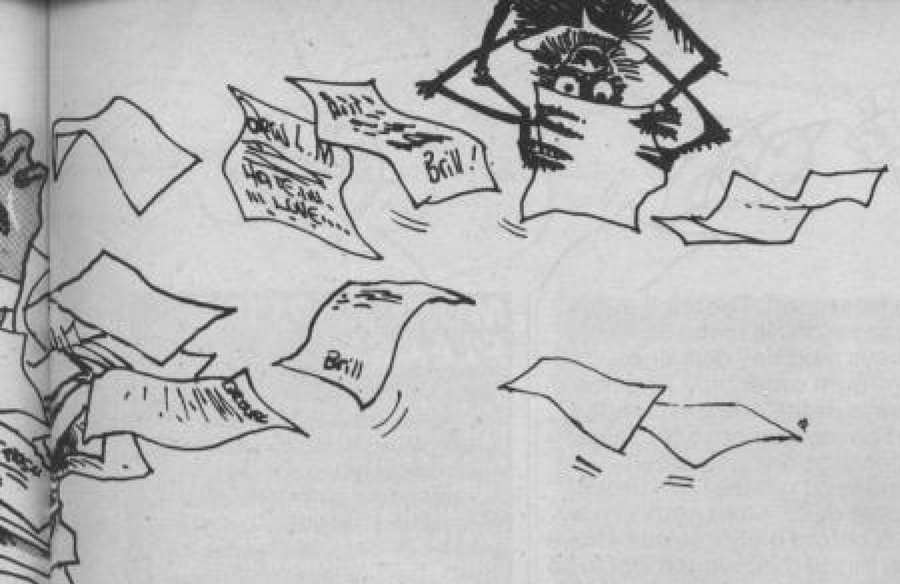
Anyone know 'Five Miles Out'?

The next writer's comments refer back to the last but one letter, and has something rather different to say about fast loaders . . .
LM

NO PROBLEMS

Dear Lloyd,
I have never had any problems with turbo loaders. In my view they aren't any harder to load than normal loaders. I just don't know what the fuss is all about. Every other letter you have printed on the subject seems to paint a very black picture on turbos, so please print this.

I'd also like to tell Darren Dalton of Luton that his copy of *Avalon* isn't unique, as I've also got a copy without the codes. Are there any more semi-unique *Avalons* about? Has anyone got a codeless *Dragontorc*



anywhere? If so, how do they get out?

I was going to make a donation towards your titchy salary but the whip round only turned up one pence and I put that in. If by any chance this is letter of the month, I'll have *Gyron*. A Porsche appeals somehow.

Geraint (non-turbo trouble) Jones, Chester

Thanks for the donation NTT, it's going towards the Mangram Porsche Subsidiary Appeal (a Division of Mangram Industrial Charities Inc.), Anyway, it might help make up the hole in my pockets the Ludlow May fair left . . .
LM

PEA-BRAINED . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you about the letter sent in by Mark Roberts (issue 15). I fail to see how the pea-brained little twerp had the cheek to write in to CRASH and say — I quote: 'Don't even try to criticise the Commodore 64 you will just embarrass yourselves.'

As you rightly pointed out, it is definitely the Spectrum that has done the most for games entertainment and the 64 has followed.

I would like to tell him what he can do with his Commodore 64, but you probably wouldn't print it!

Daniel Bennett, Bramhall, Stockport

No, we probably wouldn't! However the next writer phrased it more politely (well only just — and from a lady too)!
LM

FROM A CANDY FAN

Dear Lloyd,
I'd like to know what that slime (MR of Ealing) was doing reading CRASH in the first place. It's obvious from the tone of his letter that no Spectrum owner would want to befriend him — even if he didn't own a Commodore. So he's gone to some lengths to get a copy of CRASH. Though this isn't surprising when you consider all the monotonous crap churned out for Commodore owners. Who can blame this weed for wanting to read a truly sensational mag such as CRASH, for a stunning computer like the Spectrum? A case of seeing how the other half live, is what we have here.

Well here's a tip for the inferior half — take your Commodore, tie it to your leg and jump in the nearest river — it will do both half of you a lot of good.

Moving on, please could you tell Robin Candy that I don't think his intros are boring (well not as much as yours) and I think he's got a cute face — even if the photo is blurred.

Anna Peters, Chiswick, London

Certainly not, Anna, his head barely gets through the door as it is. I'll tell you a secret — he hates that blurry photo, that's why we insist it goes in.
LM

BORING

Dear Lloyd,
I have just bought *Formula 1* by CRL, and it is very, very good. I must warn readers not to confuse it with *Formula 1* by Mastertronic, as it is a completely different game.
Oh, by the way, I've just heard a really good joke. Do you want to hear it? Yes? Oh alright then. Here goes.

Mark Roberts, Ealing, London!

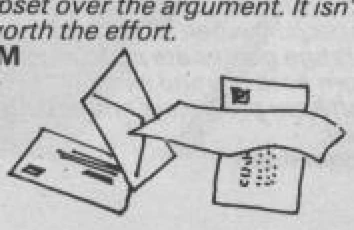
Isn't it brilliant! I've also found out that if you mix up the letters in MARK ROBERTS then add some and then take some away, it spells out BORING.

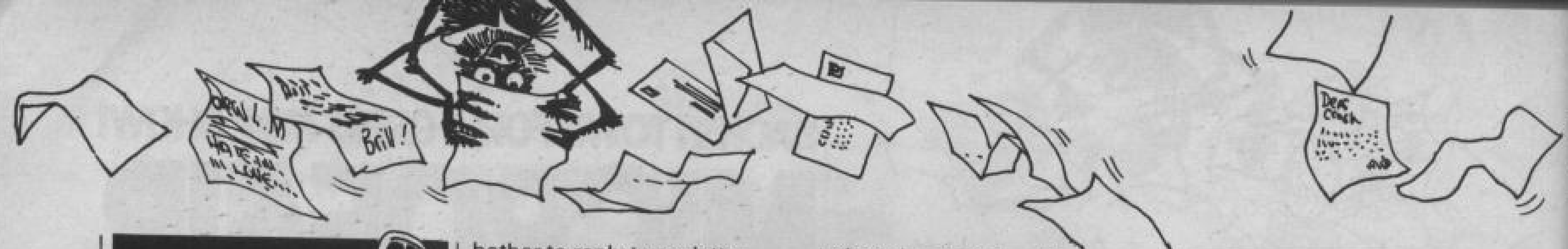
But, alas, i will give him credit where it's due. he's right in saying he hopes us Spectrum owners have learned something.

Well *(copyright 1985 Robin Candy)*, I have learned that some Commodore 64 owners are really paranoid.

MA Smith, Wakefield, W Yorks.

I think we're all paranoid, it's just that **some** *CBM64 owners show it more — and just to finish the subject off,* **Jacob Murray** *from Bramhall, Nr Stockport, Cheshire wants to know what the* **B** *in CBM stands for — Commodore Business Machines, Jacob. Well I think that's quite enough space to devote to the ravings of a suppressed psychotic. I abjure you (the long words in this issue?!) to refrain from further upset over the argument. It isn't worth the effort.*
LM





GREETINGS

Firstly, welcome to the Net. What took you so long?

You may now expect a never-ending flow of comments on each and every issue *(Groan - Ed)*, as and when it appears.

Having just got issue 16 I am afraid to say that it is worth every penny of the new price.

I see your reviewers were very quick to give *Bruce Lee* the SMASH tag, and were probably even quicker to beat it. I can honestly say that I agree with the review and still find it a loading well spent. I predict that it will soon blast its way into the Hall of Slime due to its playability.

For those readers who like the game I have a few hints. Unfortunately they will have to be sent later tonight as I am not sure of the screen numbers involved. I will say that they are to do with the flashing walls, the bushes, and a bug that allows quick access to a screen.

Daniel Marchant, 014453767

The Hall of Slime stands ready . . .

LM

MISERLY MIZAR

Dear Sir,
In reply to your editorial 'Saying Yes to Software' in the May issue of CRASH, I would like to mention a couple of factors that seem partly to explain the nobody-wants-to-know demise of the adventure game *Out of the Shadows*.

I first read about it in your excellent magazine. I was sufficiently impressed by Derek Brewster's review to decide to get a copy.

Problem number one — none of the retailers I contacted had heard of the game, let alone stocked it. And the only advertisement I has seen — again in CRASH — did not give an address for mail orders.

So I wrote to your Mr Brewster asking if he could give me Mizar's address so I could obtain *Out of the Shadows*. I never had a reply to my letter.

I am a news editor on a provincial daily newspaper and recently began writing a monthly computer games feature including reviews of the latest software.

Mizar's advertising was now carrying an address. I was still keen to see the game and publicise it in our paper. I wrote to the company asking if the could send me a review copy of *Out of the Shadows* so that I could feature it in our next computer games roundup. Again there was only the sound of silence, and they didn't even bother to reply to my letter.

No, I do not believe the blame for an obviously good adventure game failing to succeed lies solely with the distributors. The programmers, the publishers, the promoters — if there are any — should realise that publicity usually works wonders. And the more people read about a new game the more it will become known, asked for and bought.

Colin W Newman, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

I'm sorry you didn't receive a reply from Derek, but as I pointed out to another letter writer a month or so back, he does receive a large mailbag, which doesn't get sorted through in an instant, and for which he simply hasn't the time to reply to. Mizar's silence is more unaccountable and puzzling. Perhaps they will take heed of this instance when it comes to the launching the next product.

The next letter also bears on the same problem . . .

LM

SMALL RETAILER

Dear Ed,
I work for a small retailer and agree with you re: Distributors and pester them as much as possible to stock titles from the smaller s/w houses, perhaps more retailers should do the same and some things might get done. The problem with dealing direct with software houses is that they tend to want orders of 50 plus tapes which is too large for a small retailer like us.

Martin Glassborow, 919991481

I have had quite a bit of mail from retailers in response to Roger (HWMBO) Kean's editorial on software and distributors (and a small bird tells me Microdealer UK's PR man threatened to send up the boys to rearrange his kneecaps, thank goodness the Ludlow Mafia subs have been paid for the year — only joking guys). The next letter continues the theme . . .

LM

TOO EASY TO KNOCK

Dear Sir,
It is easy to knock everyone for the state of the software industry, but can I say a word of praise for the three distributors I deal with.

Two use first class post and ask for no minimum order — result — nearly always next day deliveries and no pressure from the sales staff. The third (Leisuresoft) is fantastic — always next day deliveries, minimum order only 10 games, always polite, friendly, helpful and never ever push for sales.

Because ours is a small business it means I can order almost daily, often getting new titles before bigger stores. I have also found their judgement to be pretty sound when it comes to what to stock and though I feel for the lesser known software houses trying to break into the 'big time', I really hope that the distributors do not find themselves in financial difficulties because magazines and others try to pressure them into what to stock. Remember, you only write about the games — they have to put up the hard cash!

Elizabeth P Clark, James McKenzie Clark, Dunfermline

I hand over . . .

In fact, although it isn't my department, at CRASH we do not only write about the games. CRASH Mail Order is a thriving side which depends heavily on the prompt and efficient service of distributors, and in almost all cases (I think we deal with 6 or 7), our experience matches that of Elizabeth Clark. On the other hand hundreds of letters arrive here with attached comments on the lack of software availability, the biggest problem seeming to be that of slightly older software. It may well be that this is an area where mail order is the most sensible answer.

The main point I was trying to underline, however, is that while the judgement of distributors is usually sound, it is inevitably biased towards the 'best chance'. The case of good games missing out is hardly ever put forward, but distributors also keep fairly quiet on those games that have all the publicity and promotional hype that end up being failures on the shelf. There used to be an old tennet of belief in the film business that a successful producer could make several box office flops in a row AS LONG AS THE FILMS WERE INTENDED TO BE COMMERCIAL, because the studio could say to its financial backers that everything was right, it was just the audience didn't like them. There's quite a bit of that going on in the software industry at the moment, whereas we all well know these days that it is often the cheaply promoted 'outsider' that runs away with the box office. Not so many months back a good cover, a few ads, a good software house name and a simple alien zapper would sell. It's a mistake to hide behind that, especially when all sorts of strange games are appearing from both big and small software producers and selling well.

Roger Kean

MORE ZAPPING PLEASE!

Dear Magnificent One,
I am writing on behalf of the AAOC (The Arcade Adventures Out Campaign).

I am greatly disturbed by the fact that ever since *Atic Atac*, Ultimate has produced nothing but arcade adventures, top quality I have to admit, but I feel they could use their talents elsewhere. How about another game featuring my favourite hero Jetman?

Now don't get me wrong, I think Ultimate should cater for the arcade adventure freak, but there are some of us (in fact quite a lot of us) who are sick of map making and going through hundreds of locations and getting lost in the process. There are some of us Ultimate fans who would like them to produce a more varied range of games to suit everyone's taste. I think it's about time Ultimate gave us a breath of fresh air! Please pass my comments on to them.

Oh, and by the way, print the highest scores of my friend and I on *Starstrike*, which puts the so-called hi-scores on this game to shame. Believe it or not, it's 2,368,000 (on easy), and my friend Alan Hobson's is 2,111,100 (on easy).

Martin Chan, Sheffield 11

I'll put the hi-score in the Hall, Martin. The only reason I've let it slip through here as well, is because it conveniently links into the next writer's comments (which are not so favourable about Starstrike*), and because you called me Magnificent. I'm sure your comments on Ultimate will be read!*

LM

MORE ARCADE!

Dear Lloyd,
I am a keen fan of arcade games and would like to see more and better ones available.

I bought my Spectrum because of this and this is what I have got, but in some cases no challenge, or poor graphics.

Starstrike is not bad at first sight but the actual game is not at all appealing to me or my keyboard basher mates. I hope no-one will take offence but we think it's a load of *****. However, if a company like Ultimate had produced it, perhaps it would have been a bit, if not a lot, better.

Martyn Deacon (14), Dudley, W Midlands

Obviously there's a call for arcade games that use the recent improvements in graphics — plenty of people still like zapping. I must admit that I do not agree with you over Starstrike*, however, because I think this is an excellent implementation of my favourite arcade game 'Star Wars' (still,*



despite some age, the classic shoot em up. The Ludlow May Fair has just left, taking three month's worth of the Mangram Fund with it that went into a 'Star Wars' machine — sorry Fund fans, Mangram's gotta right to some entertainment now and then, and at least a year's Candy salary disappeared with the fair as well, I'm pleased to say). Still, each to their own.
LM

SHOCK HORROR

Dear Lloyd,
I'm writing to defend your magazine. This letter was written after reading the April issue. I was shocked, amazed, disgusted and I got a good laugh. People actually wrote in to defend *Ghostbusters*! And I thought it was only clever people who wrote to you. I was wrong! How can anyone enjoy a game like *Ghostbusters*? It is over-priced, megaboring, hyperunprofessional and is a threat to the world of games. And I think it was over-rated too — it should have got 5% VFM and 30% Overall!

If any of you loonies who like *Ghostbusters* want some good games, try *Boulder Dash, Alien 8*, or *Underwurlde*.

As an addition to the 'Bop as you Zap', try 'Haunted House of Rock' by Whadini while solving *Atic Atac*. And if you think adventures are too easy, try to play 'Several species of small furry animals gathered together in a cave and grooving with a pict' by Pink Floyd. Your brain will twist!
Simon Nielson, 9700 Bronderslev, Denmark

It looks as though lots of people will just have to agree to disagree as far as Ghostbusters *is concerned, but as you can see Paul Walshe's feelings about* Boulder Dash *are not reciprocated (golly, another biggie word!) by Simon here. I suppose if we all agreed about everything, life would be pretty Mark Roberts, wouldn't it?*
LM

BOULDER RASH

Dear Lloyd,
Your naughty reviewers ought to have their hands smacked, shouldn't they? Yes, is the answer to that; but why? Well, it's BOULDER DASH . . . (pause for feelings of great guilt, sorrow and embarassment to sink in). The team seemed to think it was an original, highly addictive game and awarded it a CRASH SMASH. So, having faith in CRASH, I rushed out to the shops in order to lay hands on a copy of this wonderful game. When I got home I eagerly loaded it and began playing. I managed to force myself into playing two games before my hand leaped savagely at the plug, and the game has found its way to the bottom of my bin. I was disgusted (so much so that I was compelled to write a Limerick — see below). It was absolute rubbish, and how this Hunk-a-Junk became a CRASH SMASH and masterpieces like *Kung-Fu* and *Match Day* didn't, I shall never know.

Here's the Limerick:

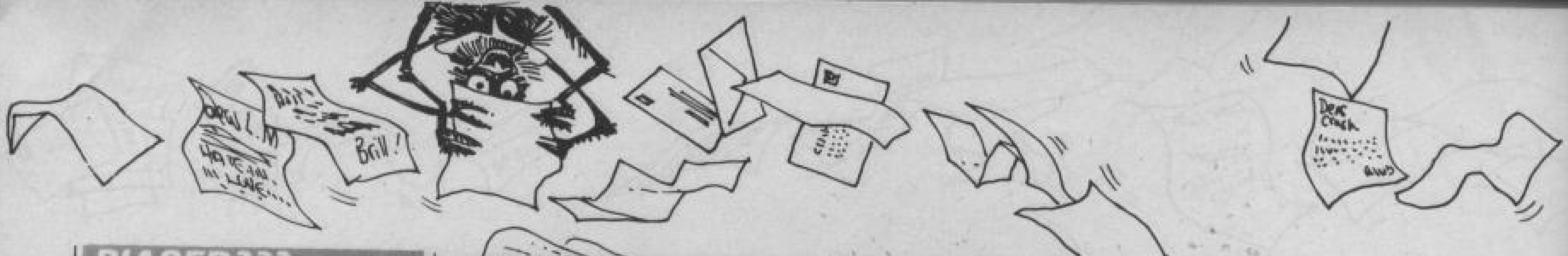
CRASH is the best magazine
As everyone by now will have seen
But when they reviewed Boulder dash
They really did make a hash
And were lucky not to cause a bad scene.

Paul A Walshe, Minety, Nr Malmesbury, Wilts.



I've never come across the phenomenon before of dashing off a quick Limerick when angry — however, it sounds healthier than slamming phones down. Far from it for me to slander someone, but perhaps there is an alternative explanation for your not liking this addictive game:

There was a Young man from Minety
Who's Boulder Dash score only reached ninety
So angry did he become
At this pitifully small sum
That he dashed it to the ground in a feisty.
Eat your heart out Keats.
LM



BIASED???

Dear CRASH,
I am writing to make a complaint about your magazine. In your November issue, you made *Jasper* a CRASH Smash. In your February issue, you gave *Gift from the Gods* 84%.

Could this possibly be because one D Brewster happens to work for CRASH? I think so. Graphics 96%? *GFTG* graphics 91%!

The animation in *Jasper* is slow and unrealistic, whereas Denton Designs have made great progress in the superb moving graphics of their game. *Gift* did not even get a colour picture!

I could recommend *Gift* to anyone, but I strongly suggest you don't waste your money on a game such as *Jasper*. I also noticed that *Kentilla* was a Smash in the same issue, and guess who wrote that?

Also: Get rid of Terminal Man, yours is supposed to be a computer magazine.

I know this will not be printed, but I think the bias in the reviewing team should be known to the unsuspecting public, who you are supposed to provide a service for.
David Wicks, Daventry, Northants.

This is a pretty daft letter when you come right down to it. For a start off, the two games you are comparing are of incomparably different types. There are some four months time gap between them — shouldn't you be glad Spectrum advances are so fast? You seem to boast some knowledge of Denton Designs, so it might be worth considering the differences between a programmer working on his own and a team of five or more people combining their talents. Although it isn't entirely relevant, you might also like to know that Derek wrote Jasper before Matthew Smith even wrote Jet Set Willy, but because it didn't quite fit in with Micromega's then 3D policy of releases, it was delayed heavily. Your argument falls to bits with the mention of Kentilla*, about which you say nothing beyond trying to fit it into your 'conspiracy' theory of reviewing bias towards Derek's programs. The reviewers of* Gift *liked the game a lot, but felt it was a bit on the slow side in the end, and graphically less interesting despite the obvious quality of the graphics.*

Fortunately the 'unsuspecting' public (how come you are so worldly wise?) are free to make up their own minds about just how much CRASH is leading them up the garden path. And finally, the level of your observation is such that you haven't noticed that The Terminal Man vanished with the Christmas Special edition months ago.
LM



THERE MUST BE A MISTAKE

Dear Lloyd,
Today I walked into my newsagent and asked the assistant for my favourite girlie mag TRASH. I asked for it to be placed in a plain brown bag (to protect it from the rain), and raced home to view its delights.

Imagine my surprise when I saw the title of CRASH before my eyes.

'What's this?' I cried, 'There must be some mistake, someone's spelt TRASH wrongly.'

Could it be the wrong magazine? Let's have a look in the index.

BEAMRIDER, BLUE MAX, BODYSWOP (Wow, this sounds better than usual). BRISTLES, EASY FRONT, FORBIDDEN FRUITS (Yes!) KING ARTHUR'S QUEST, RATTLER (double Yes!)

I must have a look at the adverts: UP 'N' DOWN, QUICKSHOT, SOFTAID, BYTES, WILLYS, BUSTERS (My oh my)!

There is Shareth trying to lure me BEYOND, Wilma's trying to make me into a WALLY, and I love the bit from the 'reader wives' on page 77 who says, 'I'm a lady of thirty who enjoys playing games on the household Spectrum,' (whatever that is).

BUT WAIT, ALL IS NOT RIGHT. THIS ISN'T MY GIRLIE MAG 'TRASH', it's a computer mag called CRASH. What the hell, if it's like this every month I'm packing in my other one for this. IT'S GREAT.
PS. I wouldn't mind the occasional photo of Samantha Fox in it.
Anon (for a clue to my identity 'you will find my double in HUNCHBACK II'

Thank you Esmerelda. Obviously when the assistant took it off the shelf you mistook it because of your severe short-sightedness — AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT CAUSES THAT, DON'T WE?
LM

JOINT TIR NA NOG EFFORT

We received a very nice letter from Mrs Barbara K Winterton from Ingmanthorpe Hall School in Wetherby, Yorks to say that her name appeared in the credits for the Tir Na Nog *map which we printed a few issues back. Mrs Winterton wishes to explain that she only helped in what was a joint mapping effort by boys at the school, who worked very hard on the game and the map. So, congratulations to the lads at Ingmanthorpe Hall for making Oli's life so easy in putting the finished map together.*
LM



A LONGER SIGNPOST

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you about the CRASH Signpost page. I think it should be longer. I would also like to know how old the CRASH review team are because age is a very important factor when analysing games. For instance, I bought *Jetpac* a while ago and some of my friends thought it was too babyish. I thought this was as stupid as the idea of selling hopelss games for £1.99, but this is the view they seem to take. What do you think of this attitude? One more thing, why does Robin Candy's picture appear at the start of the Playing Tips but we have never seen yours. Are you too ugly, or are you just modest?
John Morrow, West Denton NE5 5DA

The length of the Signpost page is down to Derek and the time he has spare from bribing the CRASH review team to vote all his programs CRASH Smashes (see previous letter if you're speed reading)! The ages of the CRASH review team range from 14 to 36 with most of them between 14 and 21 (Robin Candy will 54 next birthday, as you can tell by his blurry photo — the one he hates so much). My lack of picture is traditional, it just worked out that way, besides which I hate being photographed, it's almost a phobia, and CRASH just can't afford to keep buying replacement lenses for the Box Brownie Instamatic.
LM

DON'T SACK ANGUS!

I'm afraid to say that I thought not long ago that your magazine was getting dull. Not even Oliver Frey could save the dreary reviews and passages with his wonderful artwork. BUT THEN a shining star came along with his joyful insults and pure hatred of all forms of human life. I refer, of course, to the lead-tongued Angus Ryall, whose column is really fun to read, and on the whole a great deal better than that pathetic little snivel Robin Candy.

Don't sack Angus, he really knows the best attitude to computer games. Also, there's a tenner riding on you printing this, so please do, or I'll never be able to afford the subscription.

By the way, in February the typewriter was a 1917 Hermes, but by March it was a 1922. Did you write for BIG KRAP or something?
The Bringer of Death, Hartlepool, Cleveland

The Bringer of Death aka GA Kester, also asked me to print another message from the bottom of his letter, but this isn't a local classified paper you know! As to the silvery charm of Angus Vile, I can only say that I am not privvy to the inner thoughts of the CRASH Management as to the future of the man who has insulted just about everyone with a reasonable amount of impunity (means he gets away wiv it). Sadly, I have to inform you that Robin is sitting next to me as I write this, and has seen your comment. Believe me, he's not best pleased. Typewriters: modern technology advances a pace, doesn't it? This time next year, they might even let me use the word processor.
LM

Well it's wrap up time for this month. If you would like a copy of 'Lloyd Mangram's Long Word Dictionary' (Newsfield Educational Press 1985 Edition) in hand-tooled Moroccan leather, just send £350 to me — don't worry, it's at the printers now (honest). Don't forget to keep writing and if you're on Micronet (I'll say it again) the CRASH MBX is 105845851. In this Forum I've put MBXers' numbers after their names. If you contact CRASH and DON'T want your MBX number quoted if it's printed in the magazine, please sign and put your town down followed by an 'XXX', and we'll miss out the number. And remember, you can use the CRASH MBX for Playing Tips, Hall of Slime and Competition entries if you wish (Don't forget to put full name and address for Comp entries though)! For steam age correspondents it's LLOYD MANGRAM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.


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CARTOGRAPHY CORNER

The Ultimate Draw The Map Competition

Once again, **Ultimate** have gone away and made a smashing trophy for CRASH readers to win. Yes, you've guessed it, it's the **Alien 8** Map drawing competition!

Lunar Jetman's doohickey stars in this, the latest offering from the Wizards of Ashby de la Wotsit, and now is your chance to immortalise him in art, together with the Mouseleks and the interior of the spaceship in which all the action takes place.

There are three rules, which we will apply rigidly, without fear or favour to all the entries. They are as follows:

1) We simply won't look at any entry which is larger than 75cm x 55cm; Sorry, but it's a RULE!

2) All entries must be accompanied by one of the Ultimate Competition Entry slips contained in the Alien 8 cassette box;

3) No entries will be returned to the senders unless a stamped addressed label is included. The tea kitty can't take the strain.



Entries must be received at **ALIEN 8 COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** by **25th July** and the outright winner will receive the Ultimate Play The Game Alien 8 Trophy. Five runners up will also receive CRASH T Shirts to keep out the chill on Autumn Evenings.

Our Art Department Big Cheeses Oliver Frey and David Western will do their very best to judge the competition in time for us to print the results in the September Issue of CRASH — but we ain't making no promises, you send in sooo many brill entries for these comps. Some people must do nothing but draw maps of whizzo computer games, I don't know. All I get to do is (**CUT! — Ed**).

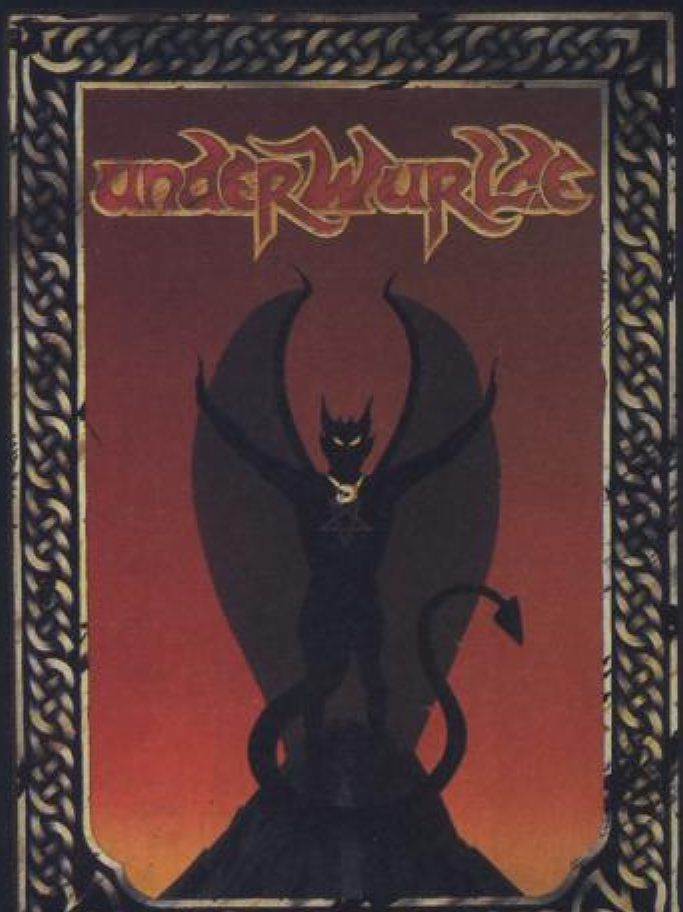
Crash Competition

ULTIMATE
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"ALIEN 8", "KNIGHTLORE", "UNDERWURLDE" and "SABRE WULF" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT. Available from W.H.SMITHS, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS and all good software retail outlets. Also available from ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU (P&P are included) Tel: 0530 411485

✂ CUT AND JOIN TO LAST MONTH'S PART OF MAP



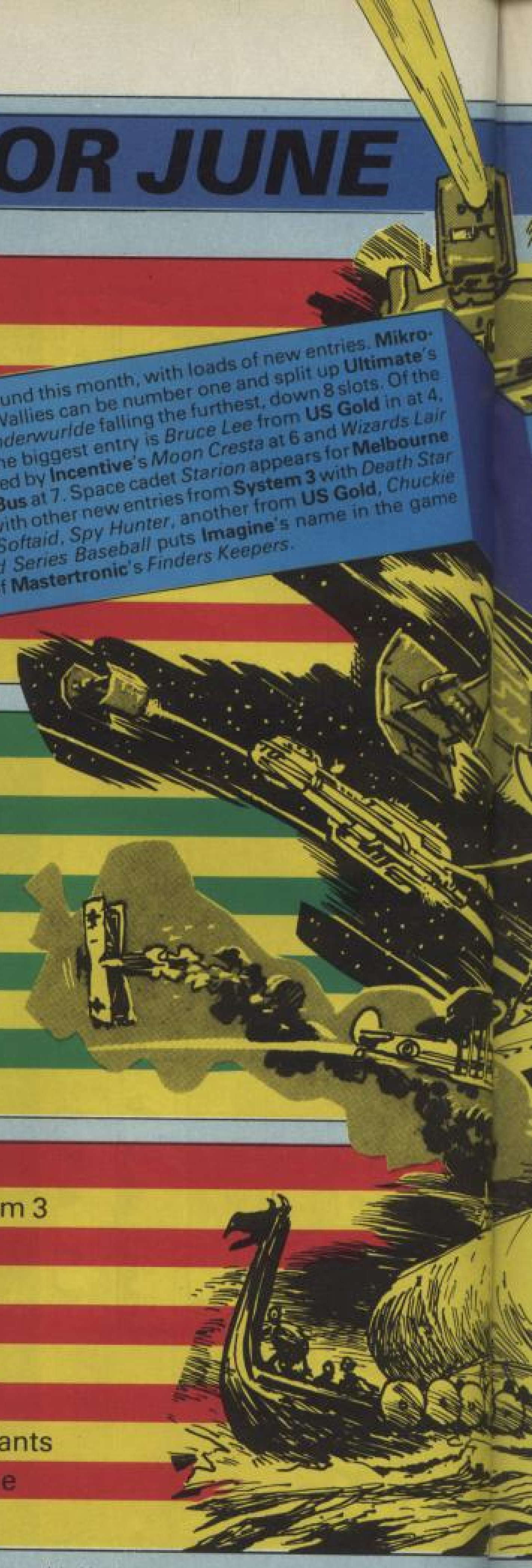


45
46
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51
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P
What you will encounter
FURNITURE
CLOCK
DUCK
TABLE
CHEST
BOOKSHELF
WALLTORCH
FLOWER BASKETS
VOLCANIC BUBBLES TO RIDE UP ON
TREASURE
FIND THE GEMS AND GAIN SPEED AND SECONDS OF IMMORTALITY
NASTIES
EAGLE
THESE ONLY APPEAR WHEN GUARDIANS ARE KILLED
GUARDIANS
DEVIL
KILLED WITH FIRE TORCH
DEMON
KILLED WITH BOW
BEETLE
KILL IT WITH THE DAGGER
PLANT LIFE IN THE NETHER LEVELS
LEDGES
EAGLE'S NEST
WEAPONS
DAGGER
FOUND
N19
O17
K16
K17
BOW
H25
B25
P12
F20
FOUND
G11
G15
I23
L9
FIRE TORCH
CATAPULT
J15
DRAWN BY GORDON DRUCE AND OLIVER FREY FROM A MAP BY THE DENNY FAMILY, HINCKLEY, LEICS.
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GAME COPYRIGHT ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME

HOTLINE TOP 30 FOR JUNE

1 (4) **EVERYONE'S A WALLY** Mikro-Gen
2 (2) **ALIEN 8** Ultimate
3 (1) **KNIGHT LORE** Ultimate
4 (—) **BRUCE LEE** US Gold
5 (10) **MATCH DAY** Ocean
6 (—) **MOON CRESTA** Incentive
7 (—) **WIZARD'S LAIR** Bubble Bus
8 (5) **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
9 (24) **BOULDER DASH** Front Runner
10 (14) **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants

A big shuffle round this month, with loads of new entries. **Mikro-Gen** discover Wallies can be number one and split up **Ultimate**'s hatrick with *Underwurlde* falling the furthest, down 8 slots. Of the newcomers, the biggest entry is *Bruce Lee* from **US Gold** in at 4, closely followed by **Incentive**'s *Moon Cresta* at 6 and *Wizards Lair* from **Bubble Bus** at 7. Space cadet *Starion* appears for **Melbourne House** at 17 with other new entries from **System 3** with *Death Star Interceptor*, *Softaid*, *Spy Hunter*, another from **US Gold**, *Chuckie Egg 2*, *World Series Baseball* puts **Imagine**'s name in the game just ahead of **Mastertronic**'s *Finders Keepers*.



11 (3) **UNDERWURLDE** Ultimate
12 (17) **BRIAN BLOODAXE** The Edge
13 (19) **RAID OVER MOSCOW** US Gold
14 (12) **STARSTRIKE** Realtime
15 (9) **DT'S DECATHLON** Ocean
16 (11) **MONTY MOLE** Gremlin Graphics
17 (—) **STARION** Melbourne House
18 (7) **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
19 (6) **SKOOL DAZE** Microsphere
20 (20) **AVALON** Hewson Consultants

21 (15) **MATCH POINT** Psion
22 (—) **DEATH STAR INTERCEPTOR** System 3
23 (8) **SABRE WULF** Ultimate
24 (—) **SOFT AID** Various
25 (—) **SPY HUNTER** US Gold
26 (18) **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
27 (—) **CHUCKIE EGG 2** A & F
28 (16) **TECHNICIAN TED** Hewson Consultants
29 (—) **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL** Imagine
30 (—) **FINDERS KEEPERS** Mastertronic

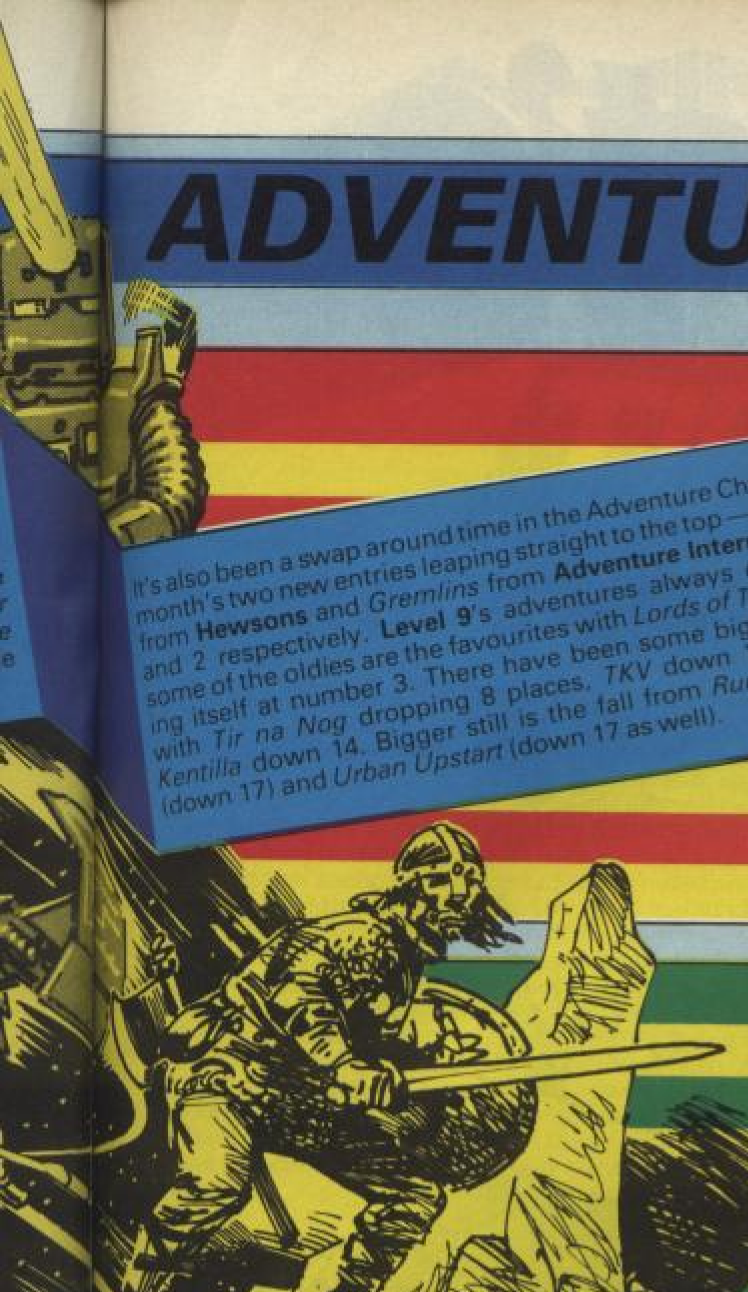
The winner of this month's Hotline draw is **Graham Ford**, Farnborough, Hants, and the four runners-up are, **Derrick Austin** from Haxby, Yorks; **Mark Rowley**, Wigan, Greater Manchester; **Steven Cooper**, from Lancaster; and **Paul Kevern** from Blandford, Dorset.

BRILL 'N' FAB HOTLINE PRIZES!!

The CRASH HOTLINE & ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart. It depends entirely on your support and we need your votes. There are two methods for voting, either use the CRASH HOTLINE PHONE-IN, or cut out the special coupons which you can find on page *112*.
Whether you phone or write in, all the names go into the Hotline Bag to be drawn monthly. First out in both charts receives £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE plus a CRASH T-SHIRT. The four runners-up in both charts each receive a CRASH T-SHIRT and THREE free issues of CRASH Magazine (a kind of mini-subscription — existing subscriptions will be appropriately extended).



ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



It's also been a swap around time in the Adventure Chart with this month's two new entries leaping straight to the top—*Dragontorc* from **Hewsons** and *Gremlins* from **Adventure International** at 1 and 2 respectively. **Level 9**'s adventures always do well, and some of the oldies are the favourites with *Lords of Time* reasserting itself at number 3. There have been some big slips as well with *Tir na Nog* dropping 8 places, *TKV* down 10 places and *Kentilla* down 14. Bigger still is the fall from *Runes of Zendos* (down 17) and *Urban Upstart* (down 17 as well).

1 *(—)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
2 *(—)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
3 *(9)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9 Computing
4 *(1)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond
5 *(3)* **VALKYRIE 17** Ram Jam Corporation
6 *(19)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
7 *(16)* **AVALON** Hewson Consultants
8 *(4)* **RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9 Computing
9 *(12)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
10 *(2)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games

11 *(13)* **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9
12 *(22)* **OUT OF SHADOWS** Mizar
13 *(10)* **SNOWBALL** Level 9 Computing
14 *(14)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
15 *(15)* **EUREKA!** Domark
16 *(17)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
17 *(25)* **THE GOLDEN APPLE** Artic
18 *(8)* **TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY** Bug-Byte
19 *(5)* **KENTILLA** Micromega
20 *(27)* **QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL** Dream

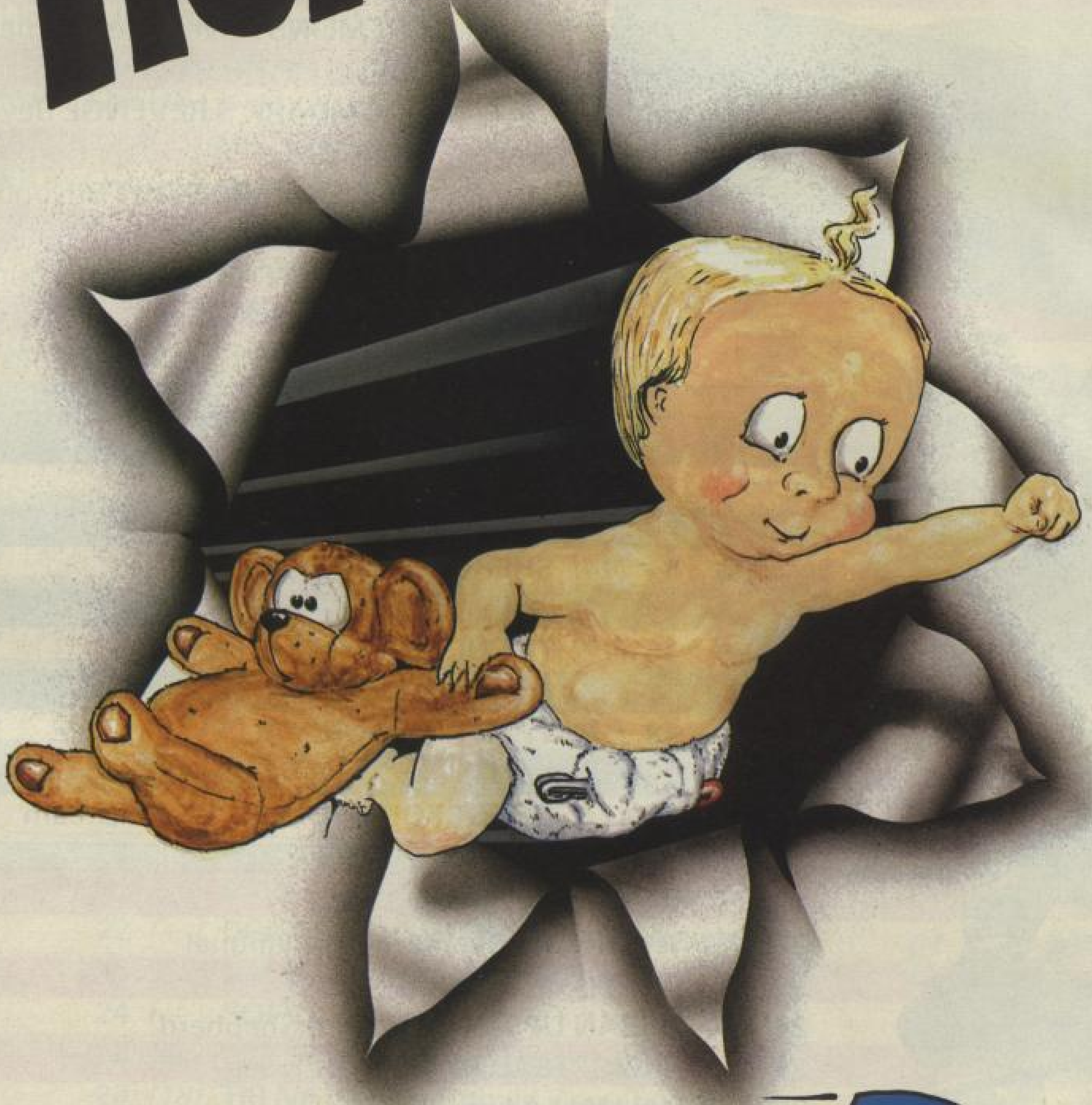
21 *(29)* **ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic
22 *(18)* **THE HULK** Adventure International
23 *(6)* **RUNES OF ZENDOS** Dorcas
24 *(7)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd
25 *(11)* **HAMSPTEAD** Melbourne House
26 *(26)* **VALHALLA** Legend
27 *(30)* **SHIP OF DOOM** Artic
28 *(21)* **ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas
29 *(24)* **VELNOR'S LAIR** Quicksilva
30 *(—)* **MAD MARTHA** Mikro-Gen

The winner of the Adventure Trail Chart for this month is **Matthew Tempest** from Bingley, W Yorkshire, and the four runners up are, **Karl Alldred**, Cadishead, Manchester; **K Bostock** of Buckley, Clwyd; **Jon Sendel**, Jordanthorpe, Sheffield; and **Stephen Nye** of Frome, Somerset.



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MIKRO-GEN

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PLAYING TIPS

from ROBIN CANDY



POKES GALORE!!

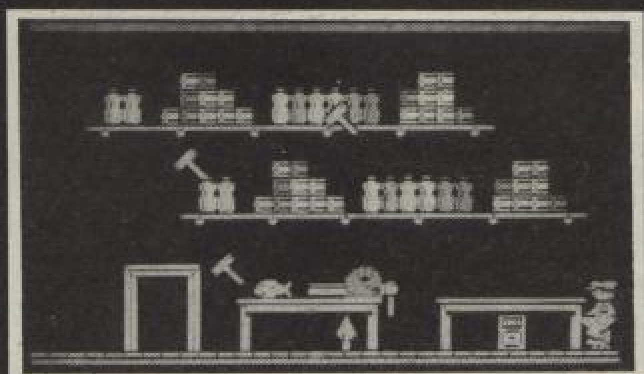
This month's issue of Playing Tips seems to have quite a lot of pokes in it and most of them from the same person, so come on all you hackers out there your talents are needed. All have been checked and found to be in perfect working order, also they were checked again after I had entered them into the wordprocessor (yes folks the playing tips section has gone fully automated and there are rumours flying about the office, all two rooms of it, that Lloyd Mangram is to be replaced by one of those Movit things after the powers that be had seen one in action last month — anyway, as Angus would say, I digress) so, hopefully no problems there.

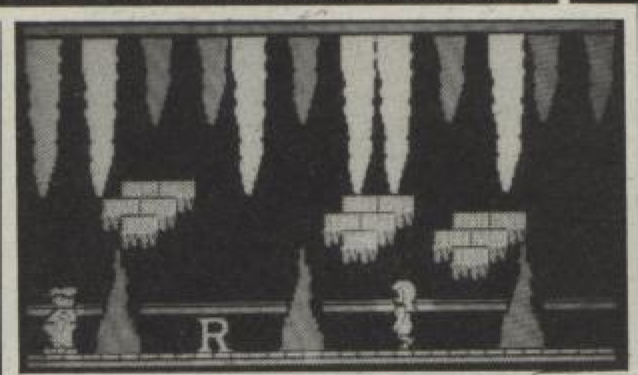
The playing tips appears to be getting larger and larger every month especially as the maps department seems to be working overtime. Well (come off it I'm allowed at least one a month) we've had this idea about doing a sort of news letter that the readers could subscribe to (don't worry nothing too expensive) which would have Playing tips and other snippets that didn't make it into an issue for one reason or another (normally because of the fatal disease lackus spacus), but we want to know what your thoughts are on this matter, so get scribbling down your vital brain waves and send them either to myself or Lloyd Mangram.

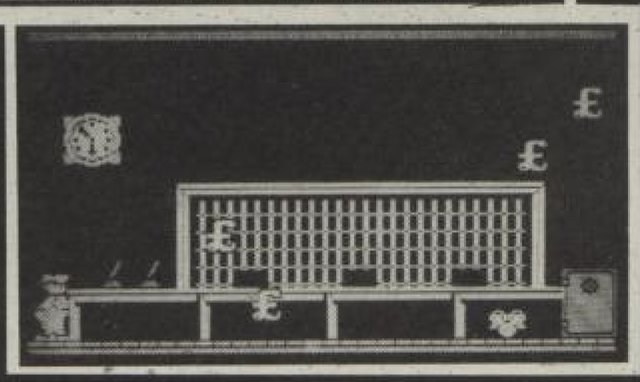
In the meantime here are a couple of tips to be going on with . . . .

EVERYONE'S A WALLY

Following on from last month's tips for this game here are the rest to complete it. If you find you are running out of energy much too often then why not use the pokes (see below) in this issue. These tips were sent in by David Yardley **of Lichfield.**







To get the letter E you have to mend the hook and stamp the parcel. To mend the hook you have to be Wally, get the super glue and the broken hook and take them to the workshed. Put the hook on top of the bench and walk under the vice with the super glue then, take the hook which should now say 'hook working'. Take the hook to the crane. Now change to Wilma and get the parcel and stamp, go to the post office and walk to the far end of the post office, the parcel should now be stamped. You can now go and exchange the stamped parcel for the letter E.

To mend the gas pipe you must be Dick and have the gas mask (you don't need this if you've used the infinite energy pokes). Go to the cave and collect the leaking Gas pipe (beware of the shark thingy, unless you've used the pokes). When you are out of the cave go and find the chewing gum, put the the pipe on top of the bench in the work shed and go and find the patch. With the patch and the chewing gum walk under the bench with the leaking pipe on it, collect the pipe, it should now be patched. With the pipe and the gas mask go back into the cave and replace the pipe. This gets rid of the sparkles in the cave and the flame from the motorway. Now that you have all the letters of the code take them to the bank in the correct order to spell the word BREAK. Each person in the game should take their own letter. B should be taken by Wilma, R by Tom, E by Dick, A by Harry and K by Wally to get the final graphic display.

For all you wallies out there who now know how to complete all your tasks but are lacking in energy, Keith Walker **of Birmingham (we seem to be hearing that name a lot recently) has kindly supplied the all crucial pokes. All little Gumbies who are having problems putting in these pokes what you have to do is enter the program exactly as it's written, run it and play the Wally tape right from the beginning, the game should then load in and you should have infinite energy on every character. (Please let this be Typeset properly — I can't stand all this poke hassle any longer)!**

```
5 REM WALLY POKES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 9,4; "PLAY IN
WALLY MASTER TAPE"; AT
11,10; "FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 FOR N= 23296 TO 23321:
READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
50 DATA 221, 33, 0, 0, 17, 17
60 DATA 0, 175, 55, 205, 86, 5
70 DATA 221, 33, 75, 253, 17,
212, 1
80 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5,
201
90 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
100 POKE 65093,243: POKE
65100,190
110 FOR N= 65271 TO 65309:
READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
120 DATA 17, 128, 91, 33, 254, 83
130 DATA 26, 174, 203, 164,174,
203
140 DATA 228, 18, 43, 19, 123,
254
150 DATA 154, 32, 241, 62, 52, 50
160 DATA 81, 227, 62, 21, 50, 82
170 DATA 227, 62, 30, 50, 83, 227
180 DATA 195, 148, 91
190 RANDOMIZE USR 65093
```

PLAYING TIPS

IMAGINE BEING BASEBALLED

Imagine have returned with a vengeance with their widely acclaimed *World Series Baseball*. Duncan Kessack of Staines has a foolproof (except where Lloyd Mangram is concerned) method of getting the computer's men out.

First of all when one of the spectrum's players has hit the ball let him get to the first base. Now throw the ball to the fielder on the first base and get him to throw the ball to the bowler, and the Spectrum's player should run a short way towards the second base. While the Spectrum's player is making this short run towards the second base, throw the ball back again to the fielder who is guarding the first base. The Spectrum's player will then return to the first base and be stumped out.



TIR NA NOG

In answer to last month's plea on how to actually activate the Seal of Calum once you had obtained all of it, Andrew Fox of Stockport wrote in with the complete solution.



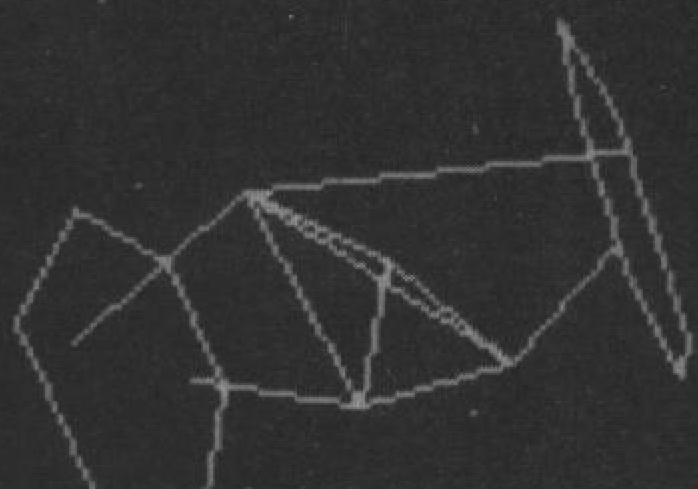
First of all find a spade (there is one in Stormbase) and go to the celtic cross in Stormbase. Face the cross to the west and walk north nine paces. Drop the spade and you should receive Calum's hammer. Go back to the start and, presuming that you have dropped all the parts of the seal in front of the altar and got the message OGAM (which incidently is a language that can be used to translate one of the scrolls), drop Calum's hammer and that should activate the seal.

STARION

Melbourne House's *Starion* is a excellent game that combines a good shoot em up with a sort of educational program (it helps if you know a bit of History). For those of you who enjoy the mindless killing phase but have problems with the anagram part of the game Colin Younger of Portsmouth has completed a time zone — this is zone 1 block 1 grid 1.

The answer to the clue 'No message for the transatlantic cable' is TELEGRAM and it should be placed in 1858.

'Einstein's special theory' is RELATIVITY and should go in 1905



'Be present at your birth' the answer to this is none other than STARION which should be placed in 1985.

'Vanishes into Zimbabwe' is RHODESIA and that should be placed in 1980.

'Herman Dresser's Headache cure' is ASPRIN, that should go into 1893.

'Vicky's celebration lacks sparkle' the answer to this is DIAMOND and should be placed in 1897.

'Established by the treaty of Rome' was the EEC which happened in 1957.

'Faraday's dynamo output' was ELECTRICITY and it should be placed in 1831.

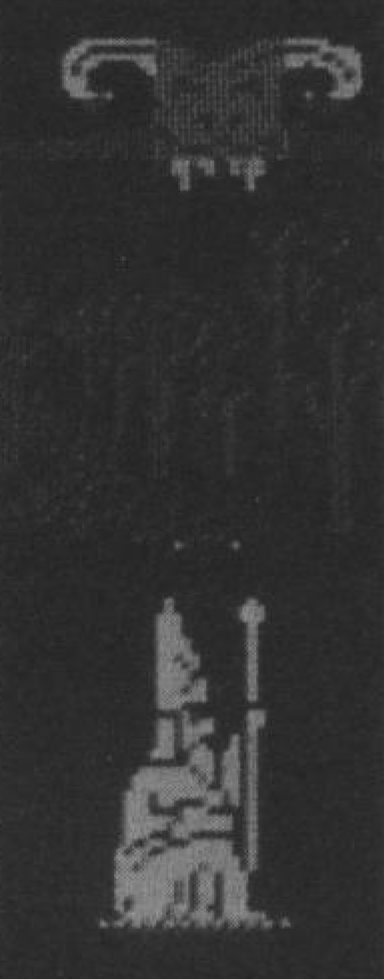
'Book for lunar xmas on Apollo 8' is the BIBLE and that should be placed in 1.

The Zone password is REDBREAST.



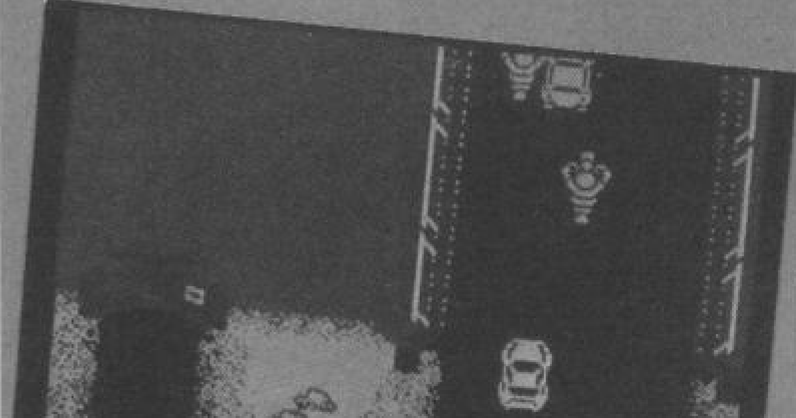
DRAGONTORC

These tips carry on from last month's. Hopefully everyone's now in Webwood. First of all find the stick — should a spider bite you then it is possible to stop the energy drain by using the heal spell (found in the Vaults of Locris). Move the stone with the stick and take the axe which lies beneath. Use Merlyn's seal to move the flagstone, go down the hole. You should now be in Merlyn's cave. Read the message that is in a chest, this can be unlocked using Merlyn's seal. Leave the message scroll and the half moon (this was obtained from Locris). Use the servant on the table in the adjacent room and take the milk and the Warrior gem. Go down the exit and axe the stump. Find a log and put the milk near it to reveal a hedgehog, take this. Go back to the axed stump and use the hedgehog on it to reveal a key. With the key and Merlyn's seal go back down into Merlyn's cave and unlock the locked door with the key. Open the chest inside that room with Merlyn's seal to find Halgor's seal. Take this and the halfmoon and proceed to Halgor's sanctuary.



SPYHUNTER

I discovered this tip all by myself by accident before going to the fair to pump the local *Star Wars* full of 10 pences (the next 50 year's wages wasted in an hour trying to achieve the magic million mark). What you have to do is survive until you meet the helicopter, you should be going at full speed at this time. Now pull back on the joystick to bring yourself to a stop. The helicopter should hover just in front of you dropping bombs, these miss you every time and you get 150 for every one dropped. So far I've achieved 200, 000 using this method but I had to go out then. *(Tell it to Lloyd Mangram! -GK)*



PLAYING TIPS



GHOST BUSTIN'

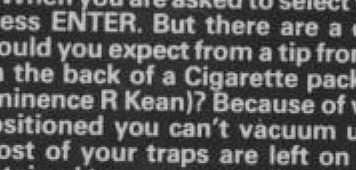
How about an invisible car that will carry an endless supply of traps and won't cost you a penny (this is a genuine Lloyd Mangram FREEBIE). Hole in the ground (I'm not allowed to use to too many 'Well's every month so this seems the best substitute) this is how to get one:

When you are asked to select your car just enter number 0 then press ENTER. But there are a couple of drawbacks (what else would you expect from a tip from the ever moaning LM scrawled on the back of a Cigarette packet — borrowed of course of his Eminence R Kean)? Because of where your Ghostbusters logo is positioned you can't vacuum up a Roamer. It also seems that most of your traps are left on the road and only a few of the obtained traps are actually empty at the start of the game.

IMBALANCED POKES

I'm afraid I haven't been able to test these pokes because the version of *Brian Bloodaxe* I have is a pre-production and it is slightly different to the final version, so I will have to rely on Keith Walker's honesty.

Enter the program below and save it with SAVE "BRIAN" LINE 10, this is for future use. Once saved RUN it and start your *Brian Bloodaxe* tape from the very beginning. When it has loaded you should have infinite lives.



```
5 REM BRIAN POKES
10 CLEAR 64000
20 PRINT AT 9,2; "PLAY IN
BLOODAXE TAPE"; AT 11,9;
"FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 FOR N= 23296 TO 23374:
READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
50 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
60 DATA 6, 3, 197, 221, 33, 0
70 DATA 0, 17, 0, 0, 62, 255
80 DATA 55, 205, 86, 5, 193, 16
90 DATA 239, 221, 33, 232, 254,
17
100 DATA 34, 1, 62, 255, 55, 205
110 DATA 86, 5, 62, 201, 50, 149
120 DATA 255, 58, 84, 92, 254, 92
130 DATA 40, 9, 33, 240, 92, 17
140 DATA 182, 92, 205, 229, 25,
205
150 DATA 3, 255, 49, 135, 144,
221
160 DATA 33, 24, 246, 17, 136, 19
170 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5
180 DATA 175, 50, 214, 103, 195,
224
190 DATA 96
```

MONTY MOLE POKES

Years and years ago when CRASH did its *Monty Mole* map (actually it was about 8 months ago but it just seems like years) there was some mention of pokes being used somewhere along the line. These pokes were never published because they only worked on our special pre-production copy of the game so they were of no use to the public. Months have now passed since *Monty Mole* was released but still there are people desperate for pokes, the only problem is that the game fills the whole of the RAM so it is very hard to get the pokes in. Despite this Mr Walker (of wally poke fame) has come up with the goods to provide infinite lives. There is just one drawback though, beware getting into the 'Jet Set Willy' syndrome — the loop effect where you lose a life before you even have a chance to move poor ole Monty and which repeats until all lives are lost, because obviously with infinite lives this will go on forever. Should this happen, you will have to switch off the game and reload. Anyway, enough of the set backs and on with the program.

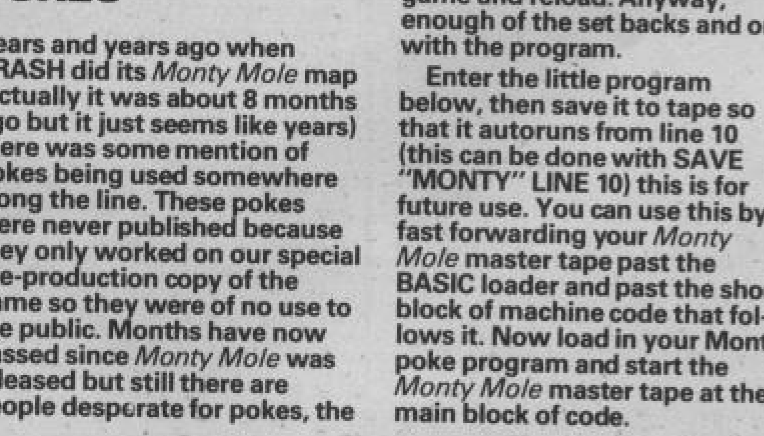
Enter the little program below, then save it to tape so that it autoruns from line 10 (this can be done with SAVE "MONTY" LINE 10) this is for future use. You can use this by fast forwarding your *Monty Mole* master tape past the BASIC loader and past the short block of machine code that follows it. Now load in your Monty poke program and start the *Monty Mole* master tape at the main block of code.

```
5 REM MONTY UNLIMITED
LIVES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 FOR N= 65280 TO 65351:
READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
30 DATA 243, 221, 33, 0, 63, 17
40 DATA 0, 192, 62, 113, 55, 20
50 DATA 8, 21, 62, 15, 211, 254
60 DATA 205, 98, 5, 49, 240, 91
70 DATA 33, 38, 255, 17, 0, 91
80 DATA 1, 34, 0, 237, 176, 195
90 DATA 0, 91, 33, 255, 254, 17
100 DATA 255, 255, 1, 74, 163,
237
110 DATA 184, 62, 195, 50, 131,
210
130 DATA 210, 50, 133, 210, 62, 0
140 DATA 50, 116, 148, 195, 96,
210
150 RANDOMIZE USR 65280
```

BOOTY

Booty has attracted a lot of attention by being the only budget game to date that has been Crash Smashed (even I've been forced by the newcomer Graeme to use that awful expression), also *Booty*'s sales recently passed the 100,000 mark, one of the very few games ever to do this. Anyway enough of this rambling and onto the pokes sent in by M Wehr and B Lutz of Landau in W Germany for infinite lives

```
10 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 0
20 CLEAR 26870
30 LOAD "" SCREEN$
40 LOAD "" CODE 26880
50 RANDOMIZE USR 26880
60 POKE 58294,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 52500
```



STOP BASIC

This program was sent in by Chris Hobson of Birmingham and can be used to stop any basic program whatsoever. You can use this program in place of the false headers used in the *Alien 8* and *Pyjamarama* pokes published a couple of months back. Enter the program and save it to tape or Micro drive but don't save it with a line number until you are sure that it works perfectly because once the program is run it disappears. Once saved all you have to do is load it back in and run it (you only need to load it in if you've saved it with a line number). You should now start your tape and the computer will come back with an OK message when the basic is loaded and stopped or a Program Finished message if an Interface 1 is attached.

```
5 REM BASIC STOP
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 10,11; "LOAD
BASIC"
30 RESTORE
40 FOR N= 23296 TO 23370:
READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
50 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
60 DATA 237, 91, 83, 92, 42, 89
70 DATA 92, 43, 205, 229, 25, 221
80 DATA 33, 75, 91, 17, 17, 0
90 DATA 175, 55, 205, 86, 5, 56
100 DATA 2, 207, 26, 221, 33, 75
110 DATA 91, 221, 126, 0, 254, 0
120 DATA 32, 229, 42, 83, 92, 237
130 DATA 75, 86, 91, 205, 85, 22
140 DATA 42, 83, 92, 237, 91, 90
150 DATA 91, 25, 34, 75, 92, 221
160 DATA 42, 83, 92, 237, 91, 86
170 DATA 91, 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
180 DATA 5, 207, 255
```

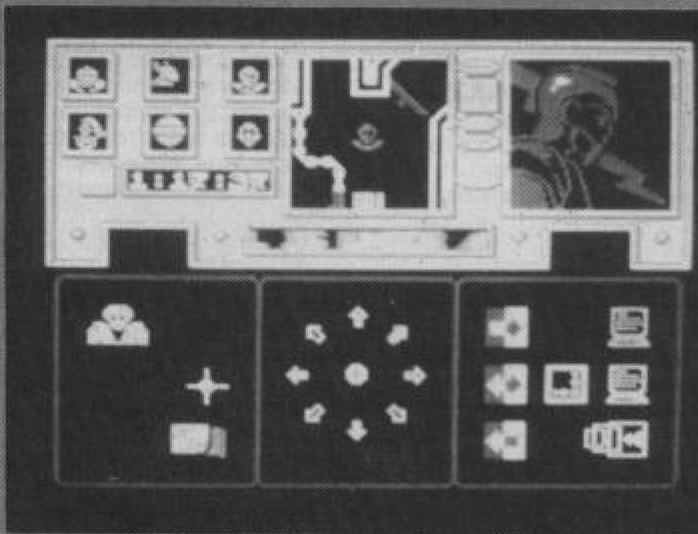
SHADOWFIRE

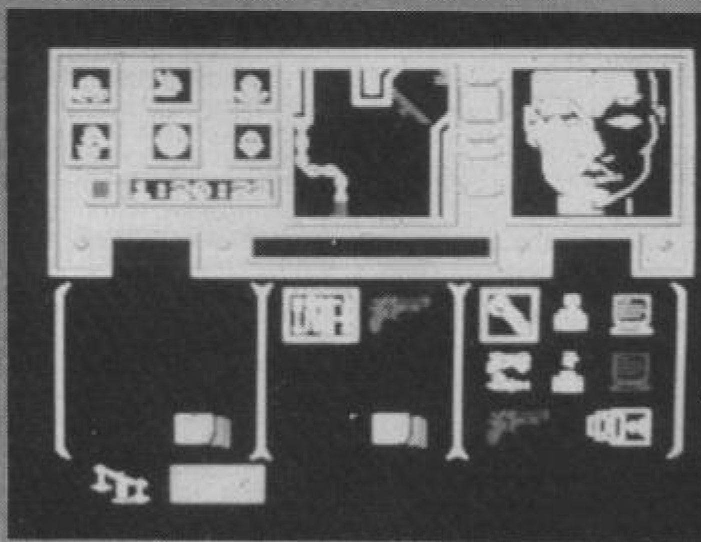
Since *Shadowfire* arrived in the offices I have been playing it day and night and here are a few of my findings. For directions I am using the eight compass points N, NE, S, W etc, which can be clearly understood from the screens in the *Shadowfire* review in this issue.

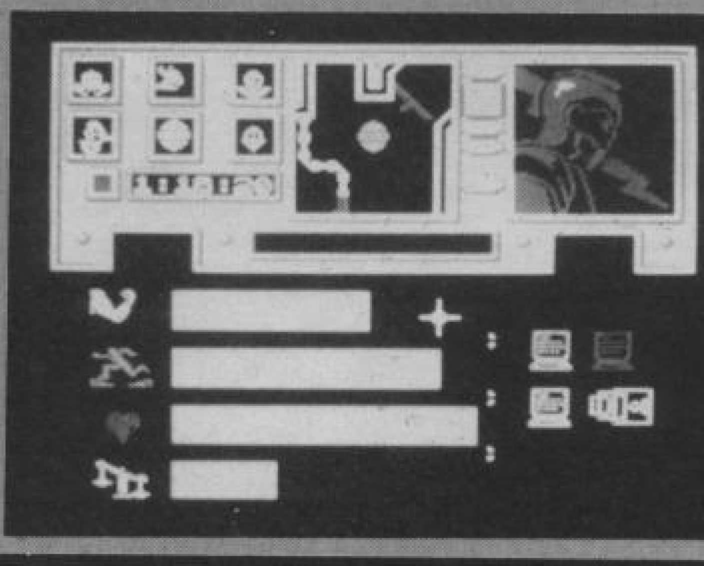
Before setting off on your mission make sure you equip your characters properly, the booklet gives a lot of hints on how to do this. Now beam down to the fighter bay (red) and take all members except Sevrina, Syylk and Maul. Move the characters that you have beamed down S twice, then SE and E. At about this point you should be attacked by two to three aliens. Once they have been destroyed get Manto to beam down Sevrina. Go to Sevrina's object screen and get her to pick the lock which is to the south.

Once the lock is picked, using Manto beam Sevrina back to the ship. Now move your three characters S twice, which will take them to a junction with exits leading E, W, N and SW. Take the E route. You should now be attacked by a trooper from NE. Kill him and move NE twice. Moving E from here should take you to just outside a locked door which has a trooper behind — here Sevrina's talents are needed so beam her down to pick the lock. When this is done beam down the other members of the enigma team to fight the trooper. Once all your characters are beyond the door you will be attacked by two more enemies and these will have to be massacred before advancing E. Advance three of the characters that still have a good amount of strength E to attack a Marshall. Send another reasonably fit character W then N once, this will take him into the Robot armoury. From here take the Rocket launcher, if it is too heavy then wait a while for your character's strength to build up.

By now the Marshall should be dead, if he isn't then attack him with a few more characters until he's really dead. By now all your team should be standing outside a locked door which leads SE. Give the rocket launcher to Maul. If he is too weak then drop it by him. Wait for 5 to 10 minutes for your characters' strength to build up, or for however long you think appropriate. Get Sevrina to pick the lock and advance every character through the door making sure they are all well armed. In this room you will be heavily attacked so before entering make sure your strength is up.







If you survive the onslaught you will realise you are in a room called 'Zoff Security' which has four exits. Get Sevrina to unlock them all. Using Zark, go through the SE exit. You are now in a room that contains General Zoff, Ambassador Kryxix and the self destruct card. Zoff will try to flee so you must be quick to capture him. Go to Kryxix with Zark and you should get the report that you've found Kryxix and that he follows Zark. Kryxix will only follow Zark because Zark is the translator. Get Kryxix onto the same location as Manto and beam him aboard Enigma, you have now rescued Kryxix. Also on the Fighter Bay is Zoff's second in command, Sky Fortress Captain Churl, he is located in his quarters near the bridge. A time delay device can be found near Churl and if used properly can help capture Zoff.

The reason for not beaming all the characters down at the beginning of the game is it is quicker to move the three characters with more agility than to bother moving all six when some of them are really only any use in a fight.

General tips are: always rest after a good bout of fighting.

Only beam down Maul when you are in a tricky situation because he is to slow to keep up with the others.

Throughout the game you will constantly be arming and rearming because your strength goes down. My strategy for this is to go into battle with a heavy weapon and switch to a lighter one as soon as the character shows signs of flagging. It is best to use some games just for mapping and exploring levels because many rooms seem to serve no specific purpose.

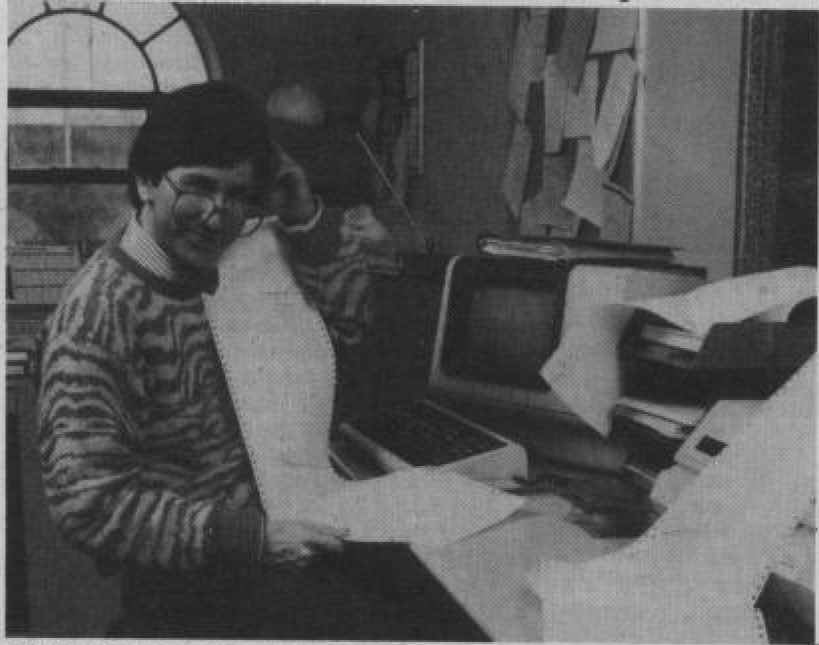
That's another month's worth of tips over and done with. I'm preparing for the inevitable tips which should be flooding the office soon for *Dun Darach* and *Herbert's Dummy Run*. As Crash is now on *Micronet* any users can MBX on 105845851 if there are any problems with pokes etc.

KERRASH! N·E·W·S

UP WITH THE LARKS

From our Television Correspondent:

Chips for breakfast? Listen, the state I'm in at 7.15 in the morning I can just about manage a black coffee. Oh — not that sort of chip. I see.



Slipped his Disc Drive? Charles Golding poses for the camera, looking suitably puzzled by some spoof computer printout.

BREAKFAST CHIPS is TV AM's new computer slot. It started in mid-April and packs into its five or so minutes features such as the Word of the Week, explaining jargon, software reviews and an up-to-the minute chart. The man behind it all is Charles Golding, also known as the station's film reviewer. So why did he swop the large screen for the small one?

'We'll be trying to find a balance between serious computing and being software orientated — it's a difficult one to strike,' he told me a few days before the first transmission. Aiming not solely at the computer literate, he'll try to demystify the micro, and instead of producing a slot for the enclosed world of hardware freaks and high score fetishists he'll be showing how the computer can be used in everyday life.

'We'll be asking why buy a computer? What are its practical uses? And we'll be looking at the more unusual games.' Charles promises that they won't be afraid to name rip offs either.

These laudable aims are backed by a firm knowledge of the computer world. Charles Golding first came into contact with microprocessors while studying Political Science at Essex University. As part of that course students had to construct a model to test a political theory on the computer. Despite having to program with punched cards he was hooked and now he is closely involved with the computer systems that keep TV AM up to the4 minute.

Taking me through their airy Camden Town headquarters he explained how there is a circuit of sixty terminals connected to a central computer — that's one for every journalist and more. All stories are typed in here and autocues, the scripts which presenters read from below the camera lens, are produced automatically. Meanwhile if a newsflash should come in from an agency, a message will appear on the screen and it can be called up in microseconds.

Naturally the system also has access to vast databanks and allows for the cross referencing of scripts, as well as the highly accurate programme timing that brings all the items together into a whole. As a 'super user', Charles Golding is responsible for the programming necessary for system maintenance, all of which is a long way from Loading a game into your Spectrum. Still, Charles has one of those at home, along with a BBC and a C64.

On the way out we looked into the Roland Rat office. Though the Rodent Superstar was absent — probably on an elongated business lunch — all the trappings of his massive fan following were there. The latest cult item is a computer game from Ocean, in which Roland can be heard to speak. This little innovation has cost a clear hundred pounds per word, putting Roland in the same pay bracket as Marlon Brando!

As we parted Charles again stated his intention, 'To be fun — not heavily serious. To open eyes.' You'll be able to judge how well he's succeeding at 7.15 every Tuesday morning.

John Minson

Graeme Kidd *was ordered to get up early by (-Ed) and catch an episode of Breakfast Chips. Normally Graeme doesn't take part in mornings, which could be why his review was a little jaundiced:*

Oh dear — having dragged my festering carcass out of bed in time to catch Charles Golding's Breakfast Chips at 7.15 the other morning, I was left with the distinct impression that I should have had a lie-in.

Admittedly the poor man is always going to be fighting an uphill struggle (to mix a couple of metaphors), with only five minutes a week to explain all that's new and wonderful in the Micro world. And maybe it is a little harsh to judge a series on the basis of one show — everyone has bad days — but after my initial experience, I won't be getting up early just for Mr Golding's output.

Not only was the presentation rushed, (fair enough if you're only given five minutes by the powers that be), but more significantly, most of the content was fatuous.

The slot I saw was sandwiched between a three minute item on the rise of Hitler and the 'Joke telling Rabbi'. (Who DOES the TVam Scheduling?)

Charles was focussing his attention on the Spectrum that morning, and succeeded in demonstrating that he was indeed a right Charlie.

Word of the Week was 'Disc' — which was defined as 'a round plastic object used for storing and retrieving information'. Well, yes, but so is an LP record.

No expense was spared, every

GREEK COMPUTER SHOW

From our foreign correspondent: Heraklion, Crete

Even on holiday it seems there's no escape from Uncle Clive's empire. While wandering through the narrow streets of the capital of an island best known as the home of the world's earliest civilization, what should I find but a shop stocking examples of the most modern technology.

The INFO SHOW has been open around fifteen months and its business has been encouraged by Crete's new university. With the Spectrum selling at 23,000 drachmas (£145) and the Plus at 31,000 (£195) prices are reasonable compared with many electronic consumer goods in Greece.

There wasn't the profusion of software found in Britain but apparently games sell well there. Which set me thinking, as I sipped my ouzo; what sort of programs would King Minos, whose palace at Knossos housed the legendary Minotaur in its labyrinthine lair, have bought? Maze games perhaps?

John Minson

TIMEX SPECTRUM

Micromatic, who supply the Timex Portugal floppy disc system for the Spectrum in this country have dropped the price of the disc system to £199 including VAT. Previewed by Franco Frey in the Christmas Issue of CRASH, the system looks to be pretty smart, and it contains its own processor. Soon we will have not only disc system but also a Timex 2068 in the office to examine closely — that's the American version of the Spectrum. Watch out for further details, coming soon.



effort was made to provide an appropriate visual. Holding up a paper plate which had had a hole bodged in its centre with a pencil, Charlie announces that 'yes, it does look like a paper plate with a hole in it, 'cos that's what is is. I forgot the real one. But that's what a disc looks like anyway . . . .', except it's made of plastic, is much smaller and usually lives inside a protective sleeve.

Charles then turns to the Spectrum in the studio. Commenting on the Microdrive and mentioning that the Spectrum doesn't have discs, he utters the immortal words 'whatever will they think of next'. Hmm. Floppy tape drives are hardly new, Charles, and how long has the microdrive been around?

It got worse. Game of the Week was *Minder*, (in which another ITV company is just the tiniest bit involved). 'It's really jolly', says the man, 'the idea is to buy and sell cars'. Perhaps the reason why he demonstrated his total inability to play the game on camera had something to do with the fact that he hadn't got a clue what the game is all about. I could have sworn I heard Charles mutter something about the computer not working when he kept pressing the key to WAIT and found that he wasn't moving to another location. 'G' for Go, 'W' for wait Charles. (Nevertheless his final verdict was 'a very, very good game'.)

My Word of the Week has to be 'Rubbish'. Stay in bed until Breakfast Chips stops being so much Breakfast Waffle.

HOW TO RUN A COMPETITION WHICH MAKES YOU MONEY

Cunning wheeze these Telecom PR boys came up with. 'Let's run a competition which means people have to phone up for the questions', some bright spark must have said. One thousand Modem packs were up for grabs and to stand a chance of winning you had to make not one, but two phone calls. For most people in the country these two calls would have been long distance, and if a hundred people phoned up for each modem on offer, who knows . . . the whole thing could have been self supporting.

Mind you, 1,000 extra modem users will be the net outcome of the competition, and who gets all the telephone bill money from modem users..........cunning eh? I suppose this is what Privatisation is all about.

ADDED INCENTIVE



Ian Andrew of Incentive got in touch to let us know that he's offering an extra Incentive to CRASH readers who reckon they've mastered *Confuzion*. The first person to wander into his shop in London Street, Reading carrying a copy of this issue of CRASH who can play through all the levels of *Confuzion* will wander out of the office again £100 richer.

The rules are simple — you must be able to play through the whole game in one go, and you'll only have one try. If you're travelling to Reading specially, it'd be a good idea to phone first and check that the prize hasn't been won. **0734 5916781.**

If you ask them very nicely, they just might let you have a go in their C5 — named after the character in *Splat!* (Zippy). Something to do with having to avoid getting splattered when you take to the streets in it.

MINDER

Where 'im in London, John Minson deals a wheel

'Ere, those boys from Dk'Tronics 'ave joined up with the team from Thames Television and they reckon they're onto a nice little earner. You see, they've turned the exploits of me old china, Arfur Daley, into one of these 'ere computer games . . . well, I guess Arfur 'ad some dodgy micros 'e wanted to shift.

Strange the game's called MINDER when Tel 'ardly comes into it, other than to shift boxes around. Still, there 'e is, along with Chisolm, Dave the barman and the rest, but the star's indubitably Arfur. The punter 'as to bargain and barter, buy and sell and try to make an 'onest day's in this simulation of the 'Daley grind'. An' those scallywags at DK Tronics 'ave the nerve to say it ain't educational. Well worth £9.95, I'd say.

'Earing all this I decided to take the jam jar down to the launch and blow me, if they 'aven't tempted the man 'imself out of the Winchester Club,



Arfur' Mo John . . . where DID you get that shirt? And why?

though 'e's adopting the AKA of George Cole — probably trying to avoid the Old Bill. Not only that but there's 'er indoors' too, and their two saucepan lids, and a right charmin' family they are.

Still, it doesn't take long before Arfur's got 'is 'ands on the review copies and what d'yer know — 'e starts floggin' 'em at a quid a throw to Fleet Street's finest. You 'ave to admire 'is brass neck. Then, when 'e's got over fifty nicker it transpires it's all going to some charity, which is, well, nice of 'im — providin' it ain't the police benevolent fund!

GETTING OUT OF THE SHADOWS

A lady from **Gem Distribution** 'phoned up last week to pass on the news that they have taken on Mizar's Crash Smashed *Out of the Shadows*. Retailers having difficulty in getting hold of a copy can contact Gem on **0279 444615** and Gem will be happy to supply on a Cash on Delivery basis to retailers who haven't got an account with them. Nice People.

FOOTBALL MANAGER

From our Football Correspondent:

Smiling, bearded **Kevin Toms** looked over the moon as he cut the cake to celebrate his third year as a division topping FOOTBALL MANAGER. Kevin's evergreen success has maintained a healthy goal average, selling over 100,000 copies, so what better way to mark the occasion than a dinner at the Dorchester.

Football Manager is now available for nine computers, but while most people think that it began in the dark, or at least monochrome ages of the ZX81, Kevin revealed that it in fact dates back to a board game he created on a Cornflakes package EIGHTEEN years ago! He now sees it as a perennial, like MONOPOLY, and explains its success in terms of the burst of activity involved in picking a side and arranging transfers, followed by the suspense of awaiting the results.



Lawrie McMenemy discusses tactics with Kevin Toms.

Following the dinner came the cake, representing a soccer match, and the presentation of a trophy to the Software Star from Southampton Supremo, **Lawrie McMenemy**, who appeared more than happy with the game's strategies. So while other programs leave the public sick as a parrot and score own goals, *Football Manager* heads towards greater heights with its imminent entry into Europe.

John Minson

N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T·

GETTING TORCED

Eamon McGing's moment of fame took place at 11.30pm on April 7th 1985. At that time, in a location very close to Camberley in Surrey, he completed Hewson Consultant's brill game *Dragontorc*.

Achieving High Lorelord status, he has been supplied with a citation for being the first person to complete the game and no doubt will go on to great things.

Could that be a Masonic handshake Eamon is giving *Dragontorc* Author Steve Turner?





Pictured here with Peter Holme is Duncan Slarke, the fifteen year old winner of the Observer Home Computer Championship. He won out in the play off held in London's Metropole Hotel the other weekend amongst a bevy of invading Japanese tourists who took over the lobby in waves during the afternoon.

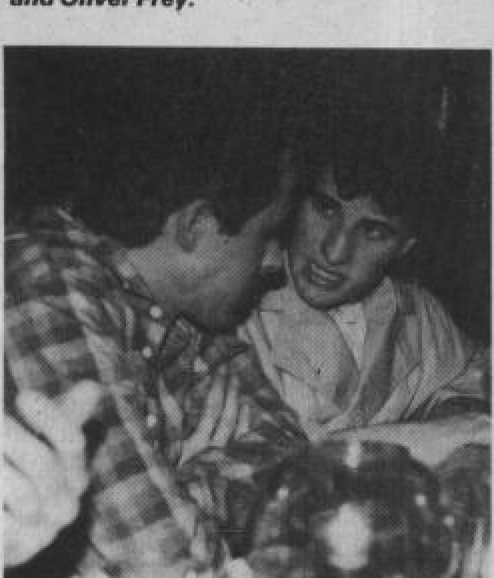
Duncan, who attends Salendine Nook school in Huddersfield won a QL, a giant cup and two tickets to visit the Epcott Centre in Florida generously provided by Quicksilva. 'My mates won't believe me when I tell them I won', Duncan told me. They will now



ZZAP and CRASH together; David Western, Julian Rignall and Oliver Frey.



With joystick aplomb, ZZAP! Editor, Chris Anderson, prepares to stab the celebration cake.



Playing Tipster Robin Candy and Oliver Frey (left) discuss adding more blood to an illustration.



After a long meal, ZZAP! Editor Chris Anderson falls face down in his food. Round the table from left clockwise; Lucy Anderson, Graeme Kidd, Chris Anderson, Denise Roberts (just), Bob Wade's head (Zzap), Matthew Uffindell, David Western, Sally Kidd, Julian Rignall (Zzap), the top of Robin Candy's head, the front bit of Ben Stone's head, Oliver Frey (standing), the back of Roger Kean, Garry Penn sitting back (Zzap), and mail order queen, Carol— picture taken by Lloyd Mangram with assistance from Jeremy (jacuzzi boots) Spencer.

ANYONE FOR SQUASH?

For the uninitiated, squash is the most potentially lethal game known to man *(you should try the ancient Japanese martial art of Knaka'Kiki—Ed)*. Not only is it faster than tennis, ... not only does it all happen in an enclosed space, ... it's also played with a harder ball. Which seems as good a reason as any for producing a computerised version. That way nobody gets hurt.

Jonah Barrington, a former world squash champion, has other reasons for greeting **New Generation**'s micro adaptation. As a fervent populariser of the game he believes that it will introduce newcomers to the rules and excitement. He was only too happy to advise **Malcolm Evans** (of *Trashman* fame) and **Paul Bunn** on how to achieve maximum realism.

He also lent his voice to the program, and his digitised scoring, which called for fresh hardware in its development, is to be heard during games. Malcolm Evans was also keen to stress the accuracy of the 3D movement.

Jonah Barrington's Squash is available for £7.95.

John Minson

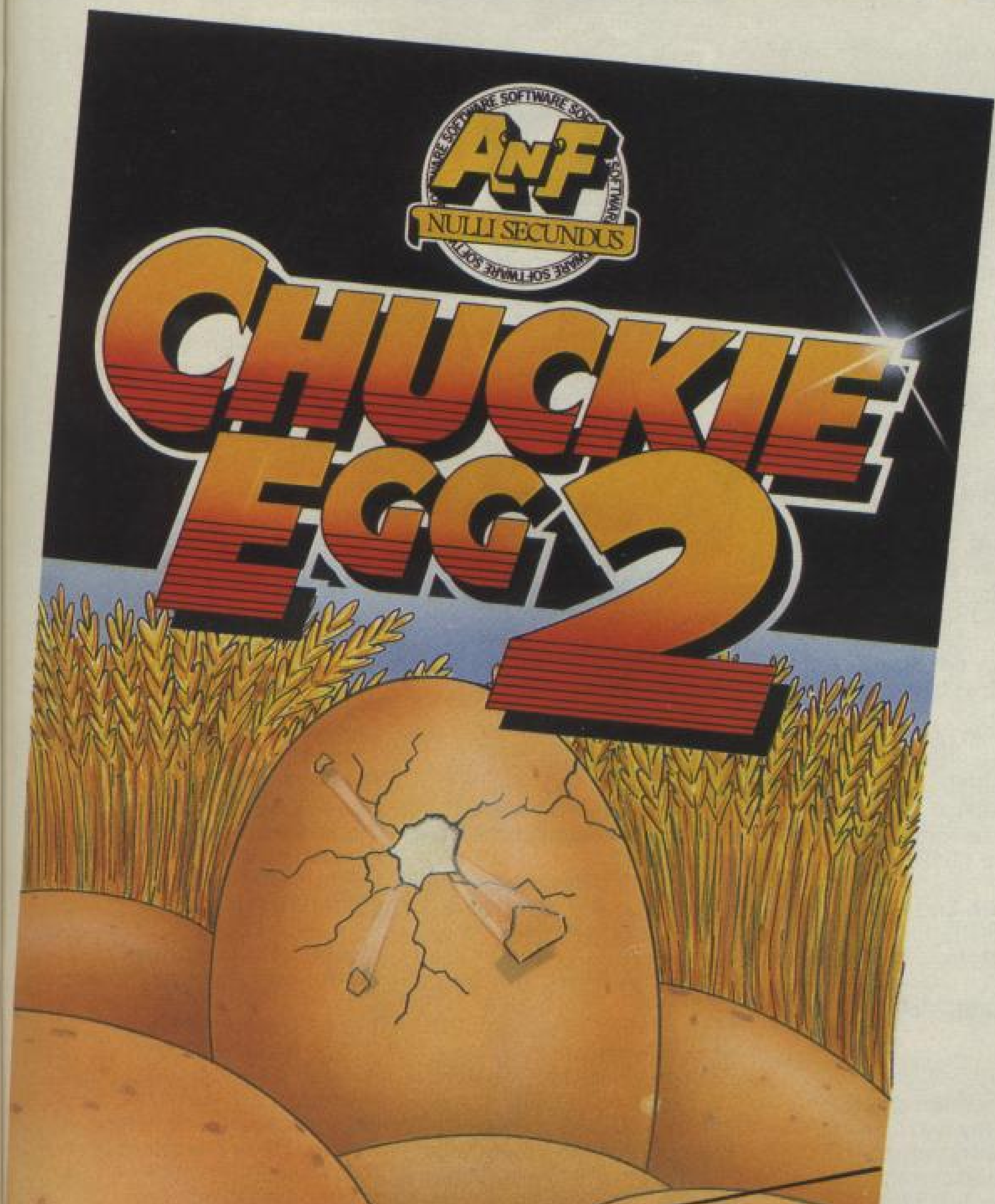
Computer Trade Weakly, the well known typographical error is holding an auction on Saturday 15th June starting at 11.00am in the GLC County Hall.

All funds raised will go to the Ethiopian Famine Appeal, and if you've got any software or hardware that you'd like to offer for auction in this good cause, get in touch with the fellows at Computer Trade Weekly, the well-known trade magazine on 0438 316561

Otherwise you could just turn up on the day, pick up a bargain and add to the fund.

Most CRASH readers must by now be aware that the publishers have launched a second title devoted to the Commodore 64. With Newsfield Publications' apptitude for dull sounding names, the new magazine is called ZZAP! 64, and it is edited by **Chris Anderson**, the ex-editor of *Personal Computer Games*. Well, not so long ago, the members of the ZZAP! team came from their editorial base in Yeovil, Somerset up to Ludlow for a launch party which managed to flatten a perfectly respectable restaurant in the town. Noted for his camera phobia, Lloyd Mangram was allowed to take the pictures and their shakiness has nothing to do with drink.

A great NEW game from A&F.







Our intrepid hero "Hen House Harry" of **"Chuckie Egg"** fame has been called in to help a **"Chocolate Egg"** manufacturer sort out his automated factory, which has gone hay wire. Harry, using all the skills he acquired working in the Hen House must get the wheels of industry moving.

Not only does Harry have to collect the ingredients to mix the eggs, but he will also have to collect the parts for the toys that go inside the eggs.

As if all these problems were not enough there are a number of other items that Harry will need to find and use to be able to complete the task. Things like ladders, bits of girders, keys and many more.

Chuckie Egg 2 contains 120 screens, plenty of surprises, and it is a true Arcade/Adventure game - *you don't just find things, you actually move them and use them.*

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S HALL OF SLIME



**Lloyd Mangram's Noose of Terror for all cheats is being tightened, ready for another HALL OF SLIME. This is the page that prints the truth, the whole truth, and nothing like the truth — a page of wholesome gruesomeness the like of which Mary Whitehouse has never seen. Anyway, after all that, let's get on with the scores . . . .
LLOYD MANGRAM**



Sabre Wulf Completed at 88% and 220310
Deathchase 111159 on Level 15
Night Gunner 30960 on p20 — bronze
Manic Miner 22608 on L16
Pyjamarama completed at 92%
Starstrike 1395700 on L8 in imminent danger of being beaten
Chuckie Egg 237880 on L22
Atic Atac completed at 91%
Pyramid 100265 completed
Andrew Murray, West Wickham, Kent

Bruce Lee 320,425. Wizard destroyed 4 times.
Kung Fu Black belt 7th 512
Pogo 122,000
Alien 8 7 rooms activated
Lords of Midnight completed
Jetpac 77,770
Daley Thompsons Decathlon day one 247,522 day two 614,309
Snowman 47,450
Hobbit completed after one year seven months
Underworld completed
Paul Hunt. Kensington, London

Skool Daze gone up a year. 41,620
Knight Lore completed 79%
Alien eight life support systems
Raid over Moscow 152,150
Star STrike 1,103,900 level six
Technician Ted two tasks completed
Kevin Simpkins. Ventnor, Isle of Wight

Bugaboo 46 seconds
Moon Cresta 37,750
Alien 8 completed
Airwolf 3 scientists
Pheenix 54,000
Hunchback final screen
TLL 13,480
Ant Attack 10 girls
Starstrike 176,000
Chuckie Egg 453,160
Atic Atac completed 98%
Kung Fu Black belt
Dark Star 18 planets liberated
David Martin, Harrow, Middlesex

Ah Diddums 4,466 level 29
Beach Head 131,800 finished on all levels
Boulder Dash 32,545 A level 1 to K level 4
Chuckie Egg 394,430 level 31
Defenda 135,150 level 9 code JJON
Doomsday Castle 164,724
Factory Breakout 36,785 7th zeta level
Muncher 202,560 13th level
Orc Attack 84,741
Pssst 119,650
Pyramid 121,471
Skool Daze 15,800 finished
Starstrike 1,319,700 1st to 7th level
Travel with Trashman 25,199 finished
Wild West Hero 109,800 23rd level
Mark Young, Midhurst, W. Sussex

D.T's Decathlon day one 450,050 day two 5,647,321
Pyjamarama completed
Beach Head completed
Starstrike 1,015,000
Ghostbusters completed
Monty is Innocent 1m.19s
Matchpoint beat computer in semis
Kung Fu black belt
Underwurlde completed
Sabre Wulf completed
Richard Crawford, Co Antrim, N Ireland

Spy Hunter 453,025
Adrian Ford, Sheffield

Chuckie Egg 2 38,000 level 27
Tapper 57,000 on very, very easy
Graeme (The Memo) Kidd, CRASH!

Grand National 257 pts £999,999 after 27 races
Moon Cresta 29,320
Technician Ted 2 tasks completed
Starstrike 1,012,810
Ghostbusters 91,500 Wilson 05211011
Kokotoni Wilf completed
Lords of Midnight completed in 25 days
Doomdark's Revenge completed and mapped out in 212 days with 69 characters
Match Day Beat computer on all levels
Match Point Thrashed computer on all levels
Kung Fu Black belt level 6
3d Tank Duel 10,500
TLL 17,500
Chequered Flag Silverstone — 58 secs; Cambridge ring — 50 secs.
Jet pac 1,240,395
Mafia Contract completed
Mugsy 79.5%
DTs Decathalon Day 1 1,603,450; Day 2 3,240,980
Neil Wilson, Hucknall, Nottingham

Shadow fire Completed
Doomdark's Revenge Completed
Lords of Midnight Completed
Dragontorc Completed
Everyone's a Wally Completed
Tir Na Nog Completed
Robin (I'm a cheat) Candy, CRASH?

Moon Cresta 37,910
Dec 1 348,998
Dec 2 489,846
Pogo 165,210
Flip Flap 152,415 3 sheets)
Cavern Fighter 45,385
Kung Fu Black Belt 3 dan
Bruce Lee 54,450
Matchday Won Matchday Special
K Broderick, Hull

Turmoil Stage R with 10780
3D Starstrike 10601000
Knight Lore Completed
Alien 8 13 Chambers
Raid Over Moscow 187550
Moon Cresta 26260
Stephen Levette, Isle of Wight

3D Starstrike 918300
Booty 38
Skool Daze 24600
Stop The Express Stopped Twice
Monty's Innocent 1 Minute 47 seconds
Ant Attack 45020
Atic Atac 97%
Harrier Attack 27870
Match Point Computer beaten in Semi Finals
Mark Smith, Chorley

Skool Daze 19250
Match Day Won FA cup
Underwurlde 37% Completed
Knight Lore 41% 5 charms
Alien 8 7 rooms activated
Sabre Wulf 57%
Beach Head 130500
Pyjamarama Completed
Atic Atac 78%
Raid Over Moscow 196300
Ghostbusters 23900 completed
Hobbit 71% completed
Mark Short, Tyne and Wear

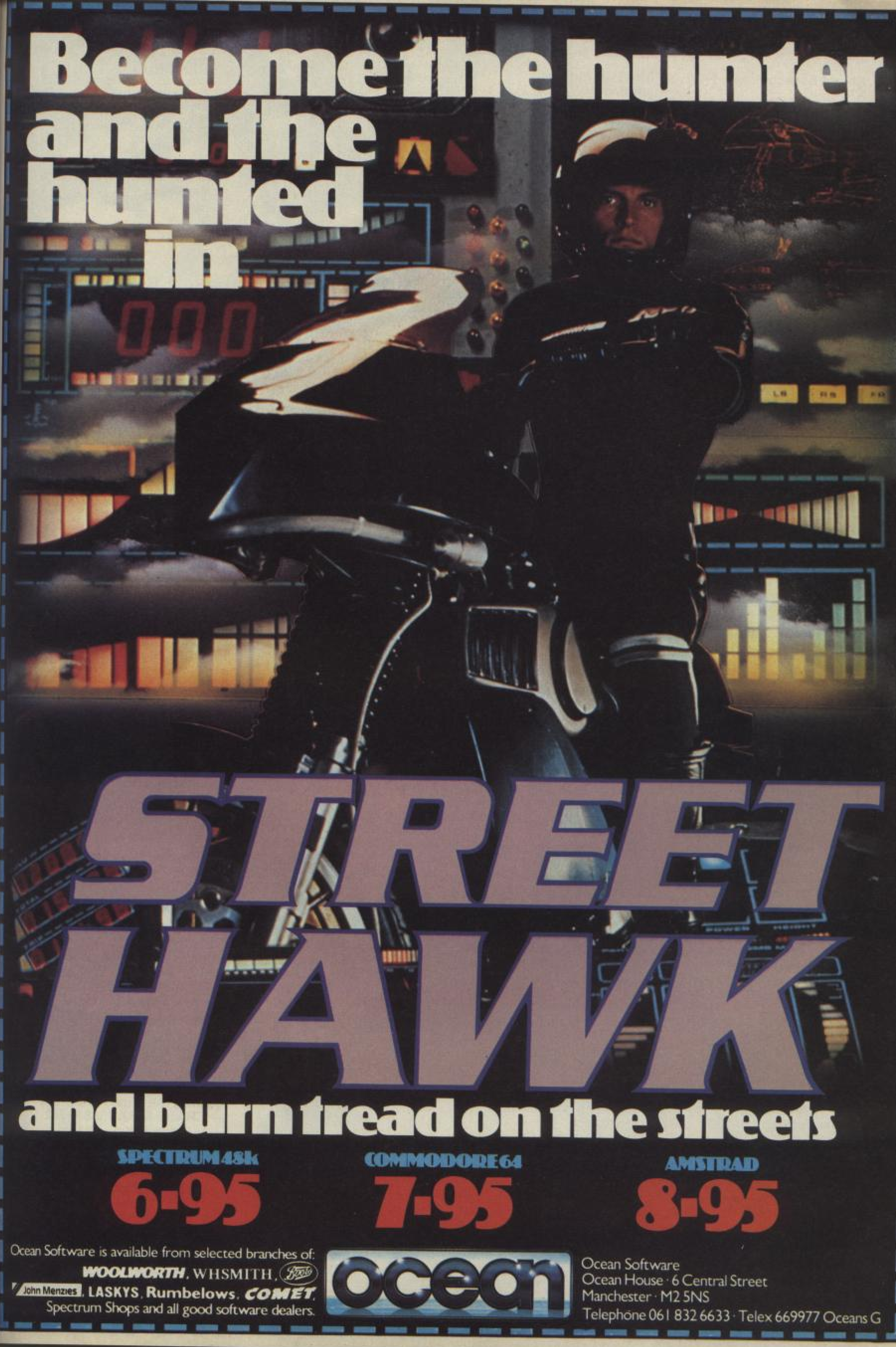
Kung Fu Black belt level 8
Buggy Blast 28820
Airwolf 4 scientists
Hobbit 89%
3D Lunattack Completed
Pyjamarama Completed
Atic Atac Completed
Alchemist Completed
Tribble Trouble 24100
Match Day Won FA cup
Paul Walshe, Malmesbury

Starstrike 2,368,000 on easy
Martin Chan, Sheffield 11

Starstrike 2,111,100 on easy
Alan Hobson, Sheffield 11



MORE BRAGGING ON PAGE 82



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and the
hunted
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Knight Lore completed with 87%
Alien 8 20 chambers
Stonkers completed
Doomdark's Revenge revealed watchwords
Lords of Midnight won both ways
Pole Position 61,080
Underwurlde 41%
Skool Daze Up a year
Starstrike 1,000,600
Lunar Jetman 111,000
Pyjamarama 92%
Kung Fu Black belt level 7 550
Chuckie Egg L46
Justin Swords, Earlsdon, Coventry

Decathalon D1 — 252831
Decathalon D2 — 380701
Knight Lore 21%
Robotron 2084 17900
Starbike 14450
Hyperaction 4495
Kong Strikes Back 8010
Steve Davis Snooker Highest Break 18, Highest Score 77
Run for Gold 400m:43.94 secs, gold medal won at Olympics, 800m:1.43.56
N Best, Downend, Bristol

Starstrike 1176100
Ghostbusters £96600
Zzoom 97760
Martin Bubb, Yardley, Birmingham

Raid over Moscow 135,210
Bruce Lee 101,275
Underwurlde completed, 54%
Pyjamarama completed, 94%
Beach Head completed, 125,800
Hobbit completed
Mr Wimpy 44,000
Inferno completed
Paul Newall, Ayr, Scotland

Pyjamarama 98%
Bruce Lee 229,175
Carl, Bitterne Park, Southampton

Match Day 5 minutes each way
Amateur won 16 — 0
Professional won 11 — 0
International won 10 — 0
Skool Daze 29,220
Full Throttle — Silverstone 1st by 35.58 secs.
Chequered Flag — **Cambridge Ring** 50.18 secs
Silverstone 1 minute 8 seconds
Monty Mole 2058
Lunar Jetman 100,990
Pssst 68,820
Atic Atac completed in 3 mins 30 secs, at 29%
Knight Lore completed at 75% in 35 days
Martin Riley, Annan, Scotland

Monty is Innocent completed
Monty Mole 8,155
Pyjamarama 87% completed
Atic Atac 96% completed
Sabre Wulf completed 64%
Alien 8 completed
Bruce Lee completed 6 times
Hunchback 4 Esmies
Danger Mouse in D.T. 6 times
Airwolf nearly completed
Kokotoni Wilf completed
Jet Set Willy done using Atic poke
Chuckie Egg L34
D.Ball, South Shields, Tyne and Wear.

Skool Daze 13,560
Adventures of Saint Bernard 4000
Sabre Wulf 590,900 at 97%
Starstrike 1,030,800
Technician Ted 11 tasks completed
Steve Davis Snooker a break of 67
Dave Carney, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear

TLL 209,444 Level 79
Underwurlde completed 26/10/84 **8%**
Knight Lore completed 68% hero
Cyclone Level 9
Push Off 4710
Pole Position 62100
Atic Atac 99% in 19m 17s
Kokotoni Wilf Beaten — dead worth it! Ugh!
Project Future 12962
Ian Stringman, Burscough, Lancashire

Bruce Lee 214,000 — completed 4 times
Kung Fu Black Belt — grade 2
CDS Pool 1,260 — frame 3
Lazy Jones 37,260
Steve Davis Snooker 59 Break
Wild Bunch completed 91%
DTs Decathalon Day 1 — 211,037; Day 2 — 486,632
Beach Head Completed 105,280
Run for Gold 400m Gold Medal/World Rank No 1 — 43.85; 800m Silver Medal/World rank no 3 — 1:42.03s; 1500m Gold Medal/World Rank no 2 — 3:31.57
Dale Stafferton, Peterborough, Cambs

Underwurlde 24% completed
Full Throttle 2nd on each track
Project Future 28,400, ship destroyed
Darren Hibbert, Congleton, Cheshire

Beach Head 113,200 completed
Raid over Moscow 76,950
Pyjamarama 87% completed
Everyone's a Wally £420
HERO 97,530
Danger Mouse in Double Trouble Saved world 4 times
Match Day Won FA Cup
Boulder Dash 5,596
Monty is Innocent 2 mins 47 secs
Ian Nelson, Harlow, Essex

Pyjamarama 87% completed
Harrier Attack completed at 23000 odd
Atic Atac 92% — bug in program stops completion
Sabre Wulf 102000 odd at 82%
Doomdark's Revenge Quite a noble victory
Ghostbusters £20,000 completed
Everyone's a Wally £670 — morning teabreak
Underwurlde Knightlore Exit 32%
Factory Breakout Zeta Level 52,000 odd
Avalon Supreme Lore Seeker
DTs Decathalon 100m:9.32; Long Jump 10.08m; Shot Putt 26m; High Jump 2.38m; 400m 34 secs; Day 2 — 110m 10.32 secs; Pole Vault 4.80m; Discus 75.9; Javelin 128.02m; 1500m 4.37.00
Jonathan 'Wally' & Julian 'Herbert' Cox, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Technician Ted 12 tasks
Moon Cresta 46,630
Project Future 567,230
Frank'n'stein Level 27
Pheenix 78,275
Moon Alert Level W — without pokes on all the games
Andrew Douglas, Hull

Chuckie Egg 276,310 on L24
Boulder Dash 4969 — cave A-L
Booty 85 items of booty
Turmoil 2420 A-J
Ghostbusters £60,300
Skool Daze 15,210
Pyjamarama 4936 steps at 100%
Match Day Won 5 — 1 in final
Airwolf 2 Boxes in 30 mins
D Condon, Orpington, Kent

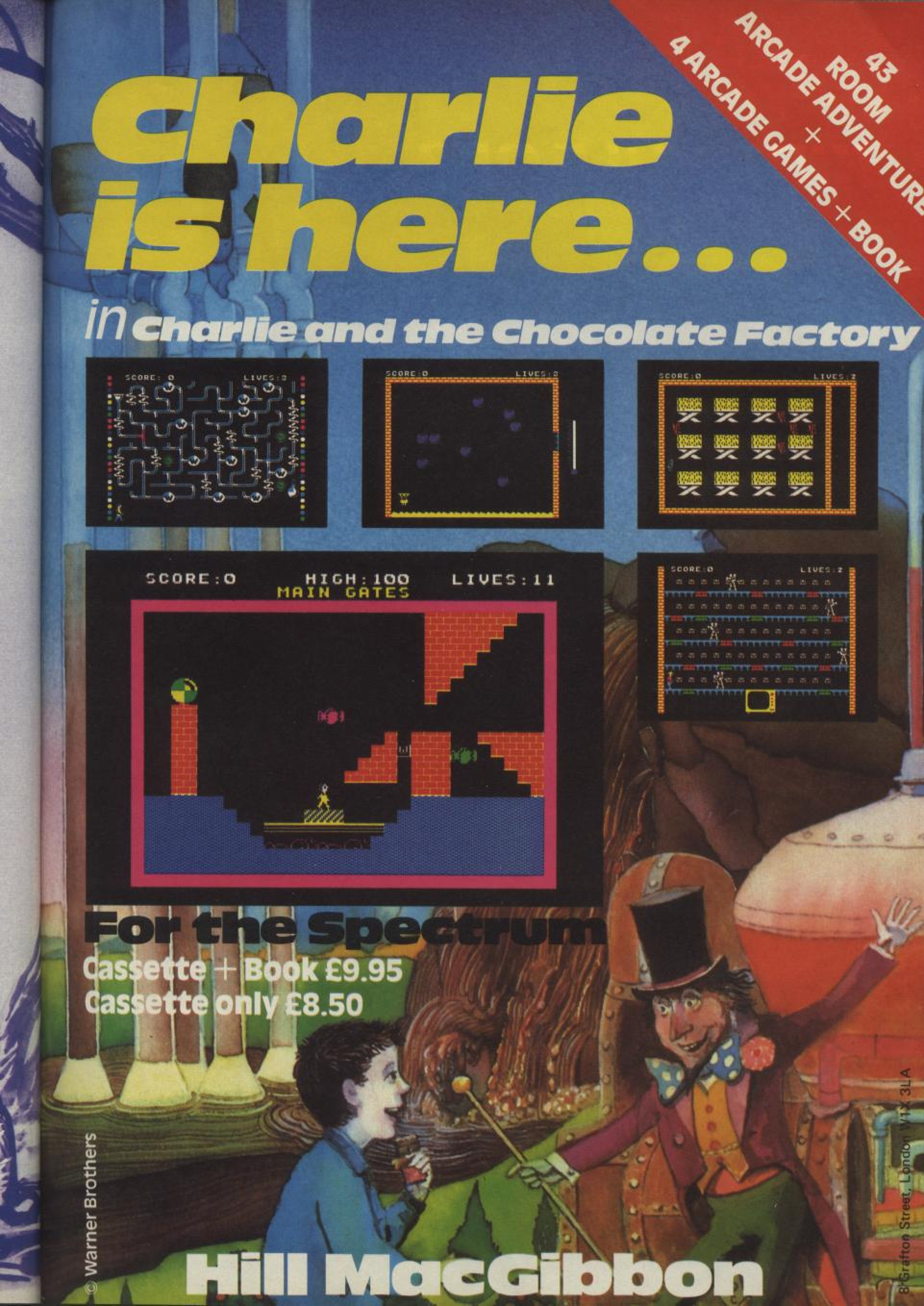
Bruce Lee 104,025
Football Manager Top Div.1 5 seasons 3 FA cup 98%
Everyone's a Wally £250 Wilma's and Dicks book
Kung Fu Black Belt Level 7
Raid Over Moscow 44,900
Mugsy 74%
Match Point Won Final in 5 sets
Match Day Won F A after replay 3 — 1
Skool Daze 7,490
Jason Stacey, Wandsworth, London

Avalon Supreme Lore Seeker
Dragontorc 26.5% High Lore Master
Everyone's a Wally £1,450
Skool Daze 27,150 points
Ghostbusters £31,100
Kung Fu Black Belt Level 8
Pinball Wizard 12,350 points
Ad Astra 5.05 5150
Michael Foord, Dartford





Okay, that's your lot for this month. Don't forget you can Slime on Micronet if you want (although BT don't like getting their lines in a mess — CRASH MBX 105845851 — but don't think all this high tech nonsense allows you to cheat, all scores go through the Mangram lie detector before being printed. Otherwise, via stamp, it's HALL OF SLIME, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.


43
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CRASH COURSE



KIDS RULE OK?

by Rosetta McLeod with Colin Burgess aged 12

Recently, I read a report on using micro computers in education which made the point that the computer has the power to develop and fulfil the human brain's creative impulse. The writer went on to say that while adults might stop and question the desirability of such power, children have no such reservations. Children, in fact, lacking the adult's awe of computers and possessing highly active imaginations, can teach adults a great deal.

Constructive use of micros in an educational sense centres around three way communication — communication in all directions between the adult, child and computer. While the adult should direct and control the use of educational programs, (and will no doubt overcome computer-awe in the process), the child will not only learn from experience but also teach the supervising adult!

Colin Burgess, a 12 year old pupil of mine, wrote the following diary entries for a week. I wonder how many Dads can identify with Colin's portrayal of his father?

My New Home Computer (With acknowledgements to Mission Impossible)

FRIDAY

I was up in my bedroom trying to teach Hammy (my hamster) to do somersaults, with no results, when I heard my Dad come in. He started rabbling on about microchips and keeping up with modern times. That's all I heard!

SATURDAY

I went into town in the morning and bought a comic and some jokes. My Dad got home and he was carrying a computer magazine. VERY SUSPICIOUS!!!!!!!

SUNDAY

I lay in bed until 12 o'clock. I got up and ate some breakfast. My Dad came through to the living room and did his morning workout, with Jane Fonda. What a bore.

MONDAY

I went to school. Got an A for science homework. In science we did an experiment with bunsen burners.

TUESDAY

I came home and found my Dad had bought a home computer. I questioned him about it and he said: 'Don't bother me now, I'm up to my neck in Peeks and Pokes'. He then went on: 'You're supposed to get 64K RAM with this. I haven't seen a sheep yet'!!!!

I hope I get a shot at it soon.

WEDNESDAY

After I explained ROMS, RAMS, PEEKs and POKEs to my Dad he wished he'd stayed with his war comics. I think 'MY' computer is just amazing.

THURSDAY

My Dad has given up with the computer. I've got a game called 'Giggling Penguin Invaders From Outer Space in the Vicinity of Ursa Minor'. I played the game several times. In my last game I had 99,999,999,785 points when a 250 point penguin waddled into my sights and then . . . the power failed. I was sick!

BODY-WORKS

Producer: Genesis Productions
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: **£14.95**
Authors: **Jonathan Miller, David Jefferys, John Cameron/Five Ways Software**
Age group: **probably most suitable for older teenagers or adults**

Most people will have heard of Jonathan Miller, one of the authors, from his television appearances and his book, *The Body in Question*. This package is described as 'dynamic exploration of the human body', and comes complete with a very comprehensive illustrated booklet giving detailed factual information about the content of the seven programs — Cells; Digestion; Respiration; Circulation; Nerves; Muscles and Marathon. Also included is a large colour wallchart.

The aim of the package is to illustrate the major processes which keep the body functioning: the different programs take the user, in turn, through the functioning of individual cells, the ways in which the digestive and respiratory systems provide what the cells need, the circulatory system's task of distributing materials and removing waste products, and the importance of the nervous system in co-ordinating the body, and of the muscles in permitting activity. In each program the user is able to select specific features to concentrate on from a menu.

The final program, Marathon, is an interesting simulation which shows how the body responds to the prolonged periods of exercise involved in long distance running. The player controls the speed of the runner, who may be male or female, of variable age, fit or unfit etc, and monitors physiological variables such as heart and respiration rates. The aim is to ensure that the screen athlete completes the race in one piece by adjusting his or her speed to avoid heart attacks or collapse

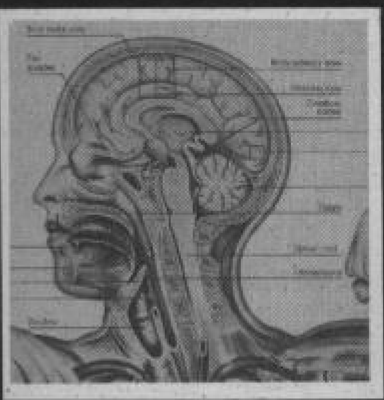




from exhaustion.

Not knowing a great deal about human biology myself, I asked a Biology teacher to look at *Body Works* for me. Like me, he was extremely impressed by the beautiful graphics, and felt that Nerves, Muscles and Respiration programs were particularly good. He was, however, disappointed with Digestion as the section on protein digestion did not bring in the role of the stomach, nor did food digestion focus on any of the breakdown products. No mention was made of the part played by the large intestine, and the inclusion of an overall view of the digestive system, graphically and functionally, would have been useful.

Perhaps the main weakness of the package is the fact that the level of complexity seems to vary from program to program. Some could be used by 13-14 year olds, while others are more suitable for older teenagers or adults. It is doubtful if *Body Works* will have much impact for home education purposes — there is such a lot of detailed information given — however, in the hands of a good teacher, the package does have possibilities for use in schools and colleges. As my Biology colleague said: 'The graphics explain the processes much better than I could'.



As a layperson, I liked the Marathon program best. It's a pity that the London Marathon is over — I'm sure that many of the vast number of competitors would have found the simulation useful and interesting, though on second thoughts, perhaps it might have put them off completely!

COMMENTS

Control keys: kept to a minimum. Mainly SPACE to select the option, and ENTER to confirm
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: quite excellent animation of the body processes
General rating: a very comprehensive package, but probably of more use for schools and colleges than for the home market. The animated graphics are superb as a teaching aid.

The designers of the programs I have looked at this month have all been assisted by children in one way or another, and have produced some excellent games.

Brothers-in-law **Peter Holme** and **Chris Jeffries**, who run Clever Clogs, began producing their games when they discovered that their own children were unimpressed by the existing educational software on the market. Their main aim was to devise games which would not only help educate the children, but stimulate and entertain them as well — no easy task! Now Clever Clogs have issued a range of programs which I'll be looking at over the coming months.

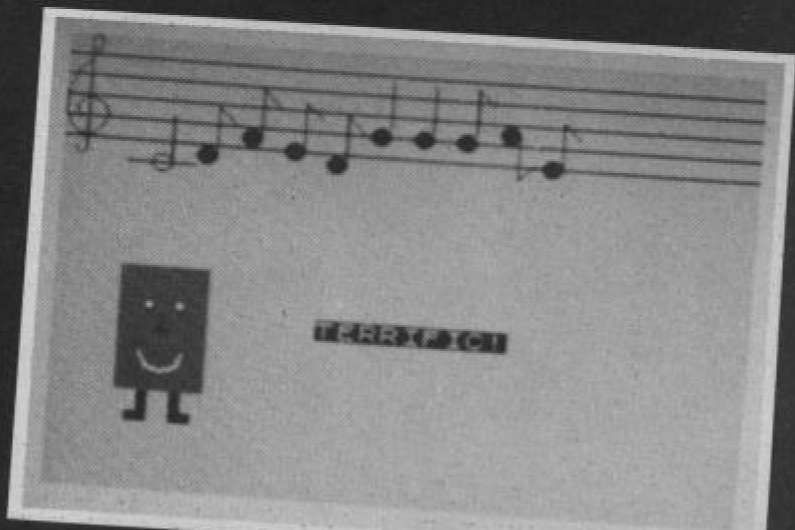
Similarly, **P W Rogers**, the creator of *Jack in Magicland*, is a Primary School teacher who tested out the game on his pupils, and modified it according to their suggestions.

It is good to know that, at last, some creators of educational programs are involving children in the design process, learning from their reactions, and as a result, issuing excellent games.



MUSIC

Publisher: Argus Press Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Clever Clogs**
Age Group: **7 and over**



As someone who loathed every minute of her enforced piano lessons as a child, I approached this program with some trepidation. however, I need not have worried — I had a marvellous time!

On one side of the tape, **Melody Maker** has two games: ***Piano Player*** and ***Composer***. The graphics on ***Piano Player*** show the piano keyboard with white and black keys, and the screen display will tell you the note you have played, the octave and the note length. By pressing the appropriate keys on the computer keyboard, you can move up or down octaves, and change the length of notes played.

This, of course, will never take the place of a real piano keyboard, but it is probably a less daunting way for a complete novice to begin.

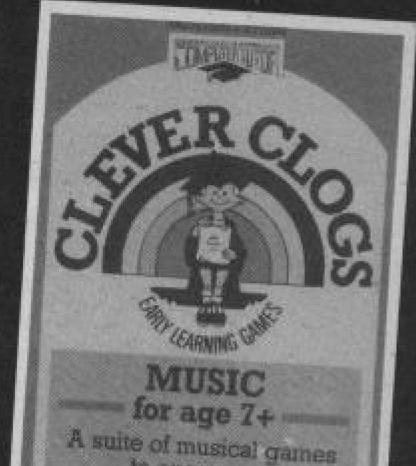
Composer encourages the player to write simple tunes which the computer will then play back. It can cope with up to 1,000 notes, and the tune san be SAVEd when complete. By choosing the appropriate option the player can listen to the demo tune (*Jingle Bells*) and watch the notes coming up one at a time on the stave. Then, to compose your own tune, you can choose the notes, specify their length and position them on the stave.

My initial efforts would not cause Andrew Lloyd Webber any sleepless nights (unless they were played to him), but I was so pleased with myself that my husband was commanded to come and listen as the computer played my completed composition.

Side two of the tape has a Musical Quiz with questions based on the Grade One Exam: *An octave is the term given to the distance between how many notes? 6 8 10*
'Fine' means a) finely; b) the end; c) the beginning

When all the questions have been answered, the computer will play the tune you have selected from: **Twinkle Twinkle Little Star; Mary Had a Little Lamb; Jingle Bells; Can Can; Baa Baa Black Sheep, or Little Bo Peep.**

Again, the Parents' Page allows the questions to be reset to cater for children of different levels and abilities.





COMMENTS

Control Keys:
Piano Player:
Q-U for white keys, 2-7 for black
Space/Enter to move up/down an octave
K/M to make notes longer/shorter
R to repeat instructions

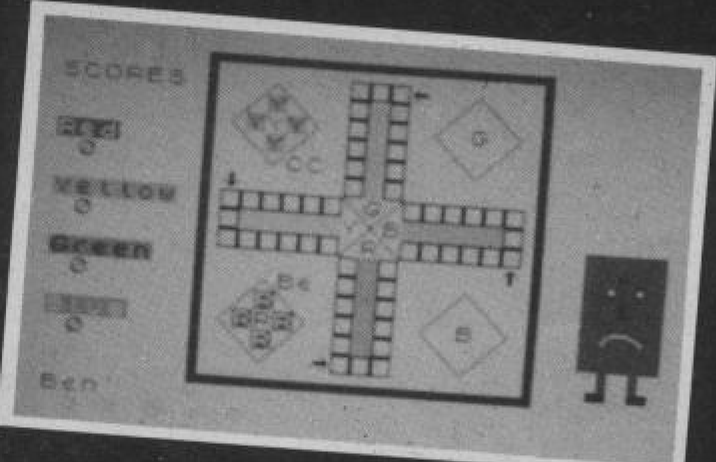
Composer:
P/O to move note pointer right/left
X/Z to move note length pointer right/left
6/7 to move note type pointer up/down
ENTER to enter a note, C to correct

Keyboard Play: Very good indeed, and the music played comes across loud and clear
Use of Colour: simple
Graphics: excellent representation of piano keyboard
General Rating: this is a value-for-money package which would provide a novice piano-student with much enjoyment

CRASH COURSE

WHIZZ QUIZ

Publisher: Argus Press Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Clever Clogs**
Age group: **7 and over**



As the title suggests, this is a quiz for up to four players, which uses the format of a board game. The player has to answer a variety of general knowledge questions and move four chips around the board. As in most board games, you need a throw of 1 or 6 or a multiple of 6 to begin. The questions which have to be answered are quite varied, eg:

Which number comes next? 3 6 9 12 —

We can cross the sea in a ———

How many legs has a bee?

An excellent feature of the Clever Clogs series is the Parents' Page. By pressing CAPS SHIFT and Q when the message 'Press P to play' comes up, the adult can reset the questions. This, of course, means that the quiz can be used with children of varying ages and abilities, and gives the program immense potential for school use.

The sensible notes which accompany the game give some useful advice to parents: 'When resetting the questions, don't make them too difficult, but gradually increase the challenge. Add questions on your telephone number or address, link some into the spelling lists from school...that way you will keep them busy for hours, and learning basic skills.'

Inventive parents and teachers could, I am quite sure, make extremely profitable use of this game. I intend to use it to help teach children Library Research skills through questions like:

What does the term 'fiction' mean?

Colin enjoyed this game though he felt, as I did, that the instructions could have been clearer and that the layout of the board could have been explained at the start, as it takes the player quite a while to become orientated.

COMMENTS

Control Keys: CAPS SHIFT/Q for Parents' Page; answers to questions typed out as normal
Keyboard Play: good
Use of Colour: simple and clear
Graphics: confined to the representation of a games board
General Rating: a very enjoyable program which has endless potential both for use in the home, and in schools

JACK IN MAGIC-LAND

Publisher: Turtle Software
Memory Required: **48K**
Retail Price: £5.95
Author: **P W Rogers**
Age Group: **6—12**



This Quilled adventure for children is based on the **Jack and the Beanstalk story**. At the start the player is told: *'You have been an idle, lazy boy and your mother was very reluctant to entrust you with so important a task'.* The task is to sell off the family cow, which you have to do before you can progress in the adventure. The game is purely textual, and some of the location descriptions are quite lengthy and atmospheric:

'You are inside a dimly lit tent filled with curious bottles and jars. Suddenly there is a bright flash and a very tall, thin man appears from out of nowhere. He bows low and then proceeds to examine your cow most carefully. After a few seconds he spins round declaring that it is the finest he has ever seen.

'I must have it!' he cries, 'No matter what the cost.'

With a wave of his hand he produces a handful of lustrous glowing pearls worth, he tells you, a king's ransom. He offers them to you in exchange for your cow.

Will you accept his offer?

Occasionally, however, these descriptions scroll up rather quickly before you have had time to read and absorb all the information (a press ENTER to continue feature would have been useful) although you can press R to have the location re-described. Jack faces some interesting problems on his travels, and meets or confronts a varied selection of monsters and giants.

Although the age group is specified as 6—12, both Colin and I felt the game would be too easy for many 12 year olds, and that the content would probably not be sophisticated enough for children older than about 9 years. Jack in Magicland has a number of features which make is particularly useful for young children: on occasion certain words on the screen are highlighted as a guide to the course of action the player should take; the notes also include the solution to the game which is invaluable for parents and teachers — I wish more publishers of educational adventures were prepared to take this step.

In the absence of screen graphics, an attractive booklet of black and white illustrations by Erica Leonard comes with the game, and children might enjoy colouring them in. It is also possible to obtain a free map of Magicland from Turtle.



I can see that this program would have enormous potential in primary schools, and a few ideas for related activities are included in the notes. To sum up, this is one of the best adventures for young children that I have come across. The author, being a teacher himself, obviously realises exactly how adventures like this can be used in the classroom to spark off all kinds of learning activities.

COMMENTS

Control Keys: directions can be shortened to N S E W U D, otherwise normal subject-verb input
Keyboard Play: good
Graphics: none on-screen, but there is an accompanying booklet of illustrations
General rating: Excellent

SAM SAFETY

Publisher: Argus Press Software
Memory Required: **48K**
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Clever Clogs**
Age Group: **5 and over**

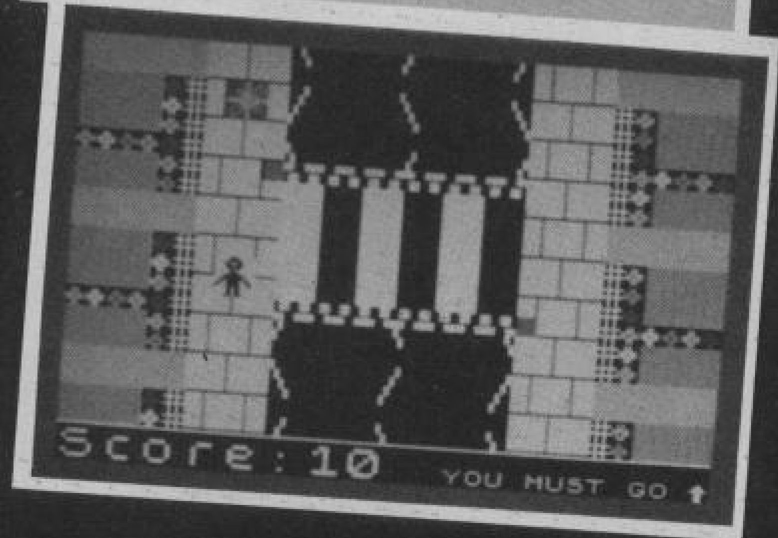
This real-time adventure is aimed at teaching children about the Highway Code. The player must guide Sam across the town according to the instructions: *'Little Sam Safety wants to reach my house in time for tea. Can you walk him across town picking up prizes on the way to get points. To cross the road you must use:*
The Green Cross Code
Zebra Crossings
Pelican Crossings
Footbridges and Subways

If a printer is attached, the player will receive a Road Safety Certificate on successful completion of the task.

This is a very carefully thought-out and friendly program which encourages the player to answer questions on road signs and traffic drill. The Parents' Page allows the adult to design the map and to insert the hazards which need to be overcome on the route. Crossings can be positioned at appropriate places, and cars can be parked on the left or right hand sides of roads for instance.

The package comes complete with some flourescent stickers which youngsters might use on school bags, bikes etc. All in all a highly recommended game.





COMMENTS

Control Keys: cursor keys (5,6,7,8) to move Sam; C for help crossing; L to look left; R to look right; M to look at map; X to end game; Caps Shift/Q for Parents' Page
Keyboard Play: quite responsive
Use of Colour: very well done. As accurate as possible on road signs
Graphics: very good representation of road signs
General Rating: a very useful program which succeeds in its aim of being both educational and entertaining.

Crash Competition

The Very First CRASH COURSE COMPETITION!

Fifty copies of Turtle Software's Adventure Game JACK IN MAGICLAND to be won

We've printed a location description taken from JACK IN MAGICLAND below — unfortunately a few squashed bugs got stuck in the action of Lloyd's old typewriter which I had to borrow to copy the words from the TV screen (it really is time they bought your loyal competition editor a typewriter of his own). Some of the words got jumbled up and came out in capitals as a result of the squidged creepy crawlies in the aged mechanism, and I'd like you to sort them out for me.

All the anagrams (fifteen in total) are single words, and what you've got to do is unjumble them, writing the correct words in order on the back of a postcard. Whizz your entry off to CRASH COURSE COMPETITION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to reach us by 28th June. First fifty entries out of the bag win a copy of the game, JACK IN MAGICLAND which retails for £6.95, available from Turtle Software, 40 School Road, Finstock, Oxford, OX7 3DJ.

You have CADHERE the top at last! As you climb over the edge, you gasp in HELDGIT at the sight which meets your eyes. It is a marvellous ISVAT of green and brown ISFLED, sprinkled with many a patch of lovely flowers. A silvery river twists and turns SWATROD a wall of HITWE capped mountains which NOSADTIME the STANDIT skyline. In the middle distance a NEEDS forest covers the rolling hills with a blanket of green. A grassy track goes south. Are you AVERB enough to travel along this ITRYMOUSSE path alone? You feel a TINLEG of ACOINPAINTIT as you set off down a road which DALES to HEWER?





And if anyone out there's got an old typewriter or a spare jumper they're not using, could they take pity on an overworked, underpaid and shivering CRASH Minion? No one else round here's going to, that's for sure...
Shut up and get on with cleaning my typewriter — LM

LIGHTen Oli's Load

Crash Competition



CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

Assist An Art Editor Today!

At last! The poor over-worked CRASH Art Editor has found a way to go on Oli-day. In a flash of pure, unrefined inspiration Oli's found a way to lessen his workload by getting you to design a cover for CRASH. Cunning eh?

New Generation Software are so proud of their Graphics Package for the Spectrum that they've sponsored a cover designing competition to the tune of fifty specially commissioned New Generation T Shirts and fifty copies of either *Travel With Trashman* or *Trashman* depending on the wishes of the winners.

Oli's done a couple of sketches of the kind of layout parameters involved in designing a CRASH Cover, and will be the final judge of the competition. All you've got to do to enter is to get hold of a copy of **Light Magic**, put on your thinking cap and come up with a cover design. Store your entry on cassette and post it to **LIGHT MAGIC COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to reach Oli by **29th August**. Remember to include your name, address, T Shirt size and state whether you would like *Travels With Trashman* or *Trashman* if you should be a runner-up.

Oli will judge the entries during September, and providing the winning entry is up to his terrribly exacting standard someone will win fame fortune and endless accolade when his or her cover design is produced, via Oliver's Airbrush (or indeed as a giant screen shot if you can work out how to get the proportions right), as a CRASH Front Cover (*Hint: two screens, one on top of the other, are about right for proportion*).

Don't be shy - study Oliver's Orders produced here and get designing - remember a valid entry must make use of **Light Magic**, and we want to receive a cassette not a painting! Good luck, oh artistic readers . . . .





d as if by MAGIC





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C

TECH NICHE

MICRODRIVEIN'

A comparison of transfer utilities

by ROBIN CANDY



Not so long ago in a galaxy not so far from here....

There came into existence a legendary beast known throughout the land as a *Microdrive*. This small but valiant beast was the creation of the necromancer *Clive Sinclair* and was his answer to the fabled Disk Drive.

Many moons passed and finally the Microdrives appeared in the shops where previously they had only been available via Her Majesty's package pulveriser, Sinclair pigeon post permitting. Immediately hordes of Sinclair minions dashed out and handed over their tokens of appreciation in return for the little gizmo which would make loading times a thing of the past. Software WOULD be much better because it could load in extra parts of a game at high speeds thus making the need for having the entire game held in memory immemorable. Everything looked set to turn the once humble spectrum into a 'proper' computer. But, dear reader, this story does not have a happy ending as it should do — it would *not* be right to say that the software houses *abandoned* our little black magic box, they never made use of its capabilities to start with.

This left our poor Microdrive owners feeling sour, they had supported the industry by investing their hard earned cash but now the industry refused to support them. Some resourceful companies started publishing utilities to help our now heart broken Microdrive owner to transfer their software. Irate software houses were quick to point out that these utilities could be misused for piracy. They forgot to mention though that if they had bothered to support the Microdrive in the first place, either by marketing software on cartridge or by providing transfer options in their programs, these utilities need never have come into existence.

These reviews are not intended as an in-depth article on how to put software on to drive but to suggest which of the packages available is worth buying to help you do so.

TRANS EXPRESS

Romantic Robot

The tape to Microdrive program on the *Trans Express* package is designed to be used by the complete novice. Transferring programs is fully automatic and all you are required to do is start and stop the tape. It transfers all parts of the program which means that loading the program back off drive can sometimes take up to a minute depending on how many parts have been transferred. *Trans Express* can transfer most of the early programs and a few of the ones that use software protection; it is worth mentioning, though, that *Trans Express* is updated every couple of months to make it better.

Also included in the package are a Microdrive to Microdrive program and a Microdrive to Tape program. Microdrive to Tape is just for back up purposes, it duplicates the program onto tape though it doesn't alter the Microdrive syntax. Microdrive to Microdrive can also be used for back up purposes but it is also a house keeping program that is able to delete files that get corrupted and to reorganise the order in which programs are stored on drive thus making loading slightly faster.

VERDICT: A nice utility, especially for the novice user though at the moment a bit limited in its use. Worth buying with the Microdrive to Microdrive option.

MICRO DRIVE 1

Lerm

This utility is a suite of programs that are used in conjunction with each other to transfer software on to drive. The tape comes with a comprehensive booklet which, though daunting for many people to use, is informative. The programs take some time to get used to and Lerm reccommend a training schedule to last over a week or so to get acquainted with them. After using this utility for a while, it is reasonably easy and the booklet teaches you a lot about Microdrives that is worth knowing.

VERDICT: I wouldn't reccommend this to the complete novice but to someone who has at least a little experience with Microdrives because the booklet is easier to understand if you are familiar with false headers etc. Once profficient with the use of each of the programs on the tape, it proves a valuable utility.

TRANS FORMER

A.C.S. Software

This is another of the automatic transfer utilities but it is slightly more advanced than *Trans Express*. *Trans Former* can cope with quite a lot of fairly recent games and most of the early games. On a few games it even offers an infinite lives option. In use it is very easy to handle, just a matter of starting and stopping tapes, a 'Stop the tape message' before transfer of a part of the program would have been appreciated. On most programs *Trans Former* gets rid of the loading screen thus saving loading time and cartridge space. One problem I did encounter though was that the program didn't always change the loading syntax into that which the Microdrive uses but this is easily remedied by using the 'disable the autorun' function.

VERDICT: Of all the utilities I used I think this is the one I preferred. Its ease of use means that it can be employed by almost anyone, invaluable to the novice and in some cases for the experienced Microdrive user. Like all automatic copiers, it has to be updated every few months to keep up with the latest protection techniques. ACS also offer a service to Microdrive users whereby if you send them an ORIGINAL of game you want transferred, a blank cartridge and a cheque for £2, they will transfer the game onto drive for you.

MD SPY

ZX Guaranteed

This is not an automatic copier like *Trans Express* nor is it as hard to grasp as the Lerm one. The instructions are fairly short for this type of copier and are fairly easy to understand. It comes with a suite of programs including header reader and creator. Using these programs you transfer your software to drive which is fairly easy to do with the earlier games after a bit of practice.

VERDICT: As a transfer utility this is fairly limited because it doesn't help with the transfer of the recent Hyper loads. But apart from that with a bit of practice it should prove quite useful.

OVERALL

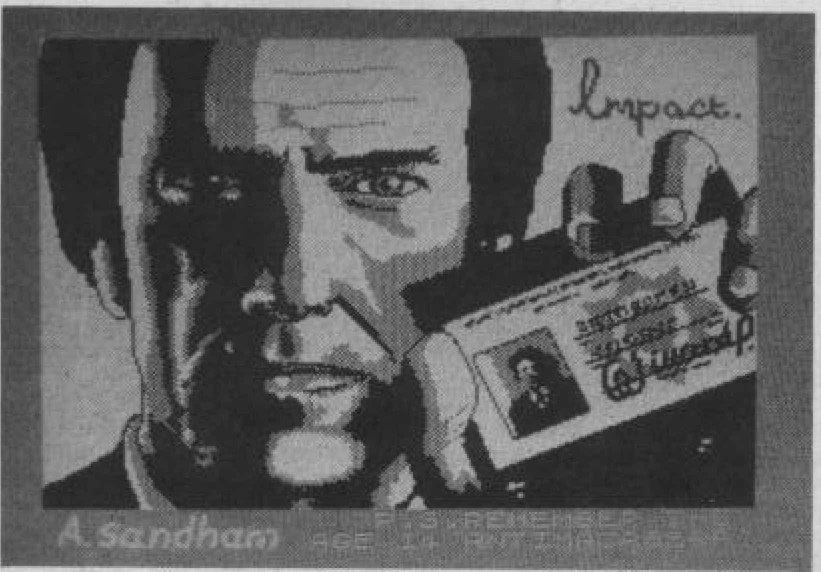
The copiers reviewed fall into two distinct categories — the automatic copier and the DIY copier. The main problem with the automatic copier is that it needs to be continually updated to keep up with the latest software protection. The problem with the DIY copier is that if you don't understand the booklet then it is of no use.

☐ LEONARDO

PART 1

FRANCO FREY gets to grips with one of the biggest graphics utilities this side of the Pre-Raphaelites

IT SEEMS a long time since we introduced the *Leonardo* competition and here we are finally reviewing the instrument of all creations. Creative Sparks has not been sleeping since, but have been suffering from the bug common to all creative sparks of never being pleased of their product, changing it here and there until finally an outside force intervened and separated the masterpiece from its creator. Thank God for the financial men as the public would be suffering even now . . . .



A sample of the excellent LEONARDO competition entries . . .

Leonardo enters the world as an instrument which 'enables you to create complex pictures and graphic elements using the full capabilities of the Spectrum computer'. This means the creation of complete pictures, User-defined graphics and complete alternative character sets and picture elements which may range in size from a single pixel to a full size picture.

As a result of the long incubation, *Leonardo* has become a heavyweight of a utility and to do it full justice CRASH is forced to extend the review over two issues. This first part will deal with the basic drawing facilities and the second with programmed drawing, windowing and texture. Let's take a closer look and put pen to paper . . . .

LENNY'S BASICS

Unlike Leonardo da Vinci the user gets a choice of selecting keyboard control or one of the many joystick interfaces which include Sinclair, Kempston, AGF, Protek and Fuller. This opens up the gateway to the production screen. Surprisingly the screen is void of any status window but the usual information is hidden away craftily to be revealed at a key stroke. Pressing **Shift 2** displays the co-ordinates at the top left of the screen, or **Shift 3** at the bottom left. **Shift 4** undoes the damage. If you've digested that, pressing **1** will reveal the full screen *INFORMATION WINDOW* as long as the key is pressed. This shows the current status of the program and includes all kinds of information about current mode, cursor, line, brush and picture details which will all make sense once you have studied the manual carefully.

Coming back to the basics, the pen or brush is controlled by selecting one of several keys. Key **P** puts you into *plot* mode and lets you draw to your heart's content, key **0** (or the fire button) into cursor mode and lets you skip over the paper. Key **0** enables you to undo any harm done (*Unplot* mode) and **Shift O** gets you into *Invert* mode, which obviously inverts the pixels' status. Your 'pen' may be converted into a brush by setting the brush size, key **M**. As usual, calling a function requiring input parameters, will replace the bottom third of the screen with the *Input Window*, with instructions on the information you have to key in. The brush size may be varied in *x* and *y* direction independently, a very good feature this, which enables some crafty design work. The pen and cursor default speed may prove to be too slow, so key **I** will let you select the *x* and *y* increments, which will allow you to draw fast chunky graphics. There is no pen speed control as such, only the definition or increments will be changed, so if you require pixel resolution, you're stuck with the one speed.

Dotted lines may be drawn with the key **F** function which lets you select a mark/space ratio of any size (integer values).

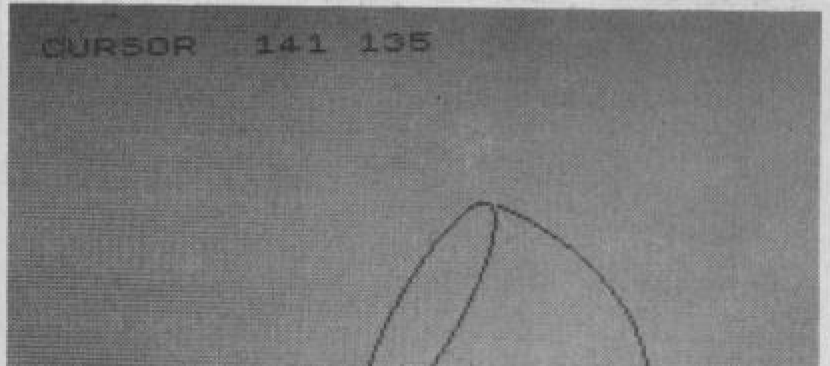
ON THE LINE

A host of options are provided for drawing straight lines. As usual line drawing requires a second variable to the cursor, the *Last Plot*. At the beginning this is set to the middle of the screen. **Shift Z** positions Last Plot to the current cursor position. After moving the cursor to the new position, a line can be drawn using **Shift Q**. The Last Plot position is not updated however so that if the cursor is repositioned all lines will originate from the same Last Plot position. Drawing a line with key **Q** sets the Last Plot to the cursor position after each line draw and the lines are linked to each other. More sophisticated lines can be drawn with the use of *Boundary* and *Direction* settings. If the boundary is on, the program detects any set pixel intersection and the line will be plotted up to or from this point onwards depending on the setting of Direction. Keys **R** and **Shift R** will set Boundary and Direction. This function is very useful for hidden line drawings and also for guaranteeing airtight shapes for later filling. Horizontal and vertical lines may be drawn through the cursor with the **W** and **Shift W** keys and the line limits are set with the first encounter of a set pixel.

Curved lines are amply catered for with the normal circle function (key **A** with the radius as variable) and arc using cursor and Last Plot positioning and Arc angle variable (key **S**). The jewel of the curved line functions is the *Ellipse* function. Any type of ellipse may be drawn with the use of up to five variables: *Vertical radius, Horizontal radius, Rotation, Start angle* and *Turn angle*. The use of start angle and turn angle allows any part of an ellipse to be drawn, and if there is a criticism it is whether the user will be able to cope with the wealth of these variables and put the ellipse to screen which he actually requires.

FITTING FILLINGS

Shift U fills the area indicated by the cursor and operates at a fairly rapid pace. Should you be worried that your precious drawing may be obliterated by an unsuccessful (or too successful) fill, have no fear, key **Y** will restore the previous condition. **Y** will operate with almost any function other than *Cover* and provides a useful error protection.



The amazing ellipse function in action . . .

ADDING COLOUR

So far the work carried out was purely setting and resetting pixels in all kinds of order on the screen. For colour work the attribute mode is entered by pressing key **B**. The flashing *Pixel*

Cursor is replaced with the *Character Cursor*. As with a paint brush the colour pots have to be selected and this is done using key **Q**. The program prompts for *Ink, Paper, Bright* and *Flash*. Putting the colour brush to paper is accomplished with key **W** and moving around the cursor will leave the required colours in the attribute characters. The brush may be lifted with key **0** (Cursor mode). There is a special *Character Information Window* on call up which displays all the current colour settings. The position of the cursor is shown in character spaces from the top left of the screen together with the colour of the screen in the cursor position. The character step increment settings and the current colour settings are also displayed.

When changing the colour settings there is an option of inputting *n* as an entry for the settings which require no change. This allows only one attribute to be changed and speeds up the process immensely. Special colouring functions include the change of colour of the whole screen or window with key **A** and *Colour swap*, which will exchange any attribute characters on the screen of given colour settings with the new settings. The function prompts for the old and new colour settings and changes any attribute characters that match with the new colours.

Last but not least colour patterns can be created on the screen by using the window facility which will be explained in the next issue. A window is created on the screen and filled with the required colour pattern. By setting the step size of the brush to be similar to the size of the window and entering the key **F** function, the brush may be positioned at the desired place and the **0** key or fire button toggled. The window will be copied into the new position and the entire screen may be covered with the pattern if so required.

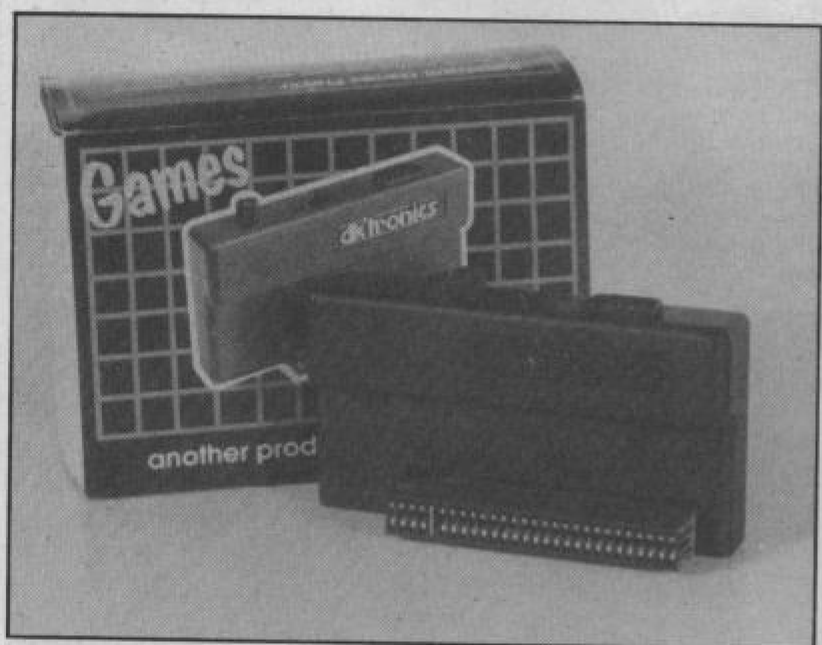
In the next issue *Leonardo* will display its special features which include the Windowing technique providing magnification and repositioning of part of your picture, the UDG creation, the creation of texture using the COVER facility and the very versatile and powerful Programmed Drawing facility which provides routine drawing of figures and patterns.

Program: Leonardo
Producer: **Creative Sparks**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**

INTERFACE IMPROVEMENTS

We take a brief look at a couple of developments on the edge connector.

DK'Tronics Decelerate



This could escalate. We've been using the Nidd Valley Slomo for yonks now to stop games so that they can be photographed. Then DK'Tronics came up with their **Games Player** joystick interface for the Spectrum, which allows you to connect a joystick to the computer and use it with Kempston compatible software. The Games Player also has a slow motion facility - and ever since it arrived in the office the Slomo has been ousted from our Software Editor's desk.

In fairly exhaustive tests, the Games Player Interface won out over the trusty basic Slomo, not least because we didn't manage to crash any of the games that were being photographed for this issue of the magazine.

The Slomo allows you to stop programs dead in their tracks (which Games Player doesn't), but you sometimes pay the penalty of having to reload the proggy after you try to carry on from where you paused the action.

The DK'Tronics interface allows the slow motion facility to be switched in and out at will so it can be used as a straightforward Kempston compatible joystick interface. When the slow motion facility is switched in, with a slider switch on the top of the box, the speed of action is controlled by a rotating knob. Cunningly, this arrangement means that you can preset a speed, and play a game at full speed until you come to the tricky bit when the slow speed action can be engaged by flicking the switch.

OK, so it's not a programmable interface - you're stuck with Kempston protocol - and the design wizards at DK'Tronics could have earned themselves extra brownie points if they'd added a LED to the whole contraption which lit up when the slow motion controller was switched in, and stayed off when the speed controller was deactivated.

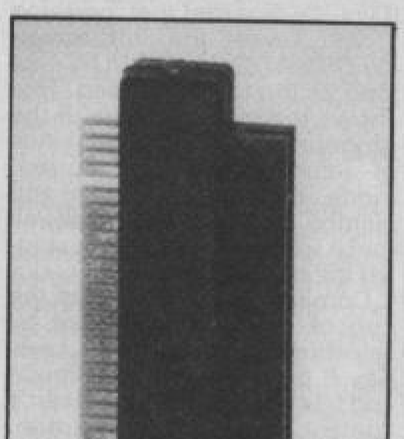
For the price however, £12.95, the Games Controller's not a bad deal if you're an inveterate cheat, need or want to photograph or examine other people's games, or just like to play games a little more gently until you've got to grips with their super fast action.

Rational Reset

Nidd Valley will no doubt want to send us their combined Slomo and joystick interface once they read our Games Controller review, and in the interests of fair play, we'll try to take a look at their product next issue. Meanwhile, here's a few words about their gentle reset add-on . . . .

'Switching the power off on the Spectrum to cure a program crash is about as non sensible as switching off the National Grid to change a light bulb'. Or so **Nidd Valley Micro Products** would have us believe. Funny, but when I turn my Spectrum off all the computers in the country don't stop working too . . . .

Mind you, Nidd Valley are justifiably pleased at being able to supply a little doobry which clips onto the edge connector and allows you to effect a reset of the Z80 chip only by pressing

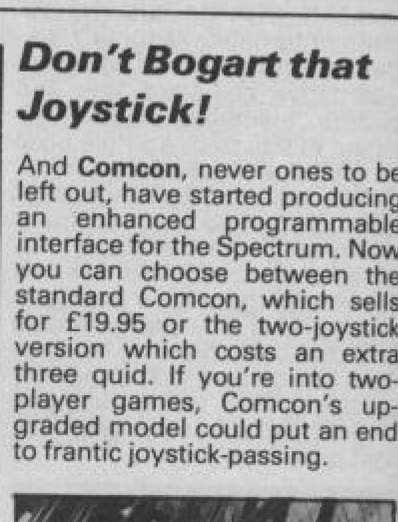


the 'small, unobtrusive red button' affixed to the casing.

Not a bad deal at £4.95 including P&P, VAT and all the rest. **0423 864488** if you don't want to keep reprogramming joystick interfaces etc.

Don't Bogart that Joystick!

And **Comcon**, never ones to be left out, have started producing an enhanced programmable interface for the Spectrum. Now you can choose between the standard Comcon, which sells for £19.95 or the two-joystick version which costs an extra three quid. If you're into two-player games, Comcon's upgraded model could put an end to frantic joystick-passing.



SAMPLING THE SOUND WITH DATEL

Messrs Bates and Kidd poke their noses into a piece of musical hardware

Sound sampling technology is not new — mega expensive studio systems have been in existence for quite a few years. They are used to capture real sounds, recorded conventionally, and convert them into digital form. Once a sound has been captured and converted into numbers, it can be stored in computer memory, manipulated and edited before being reconverted into an analogue signal for playback. All sorts of whizzo effects can be added during the editing stage, and the sounds engineered for bands such as Frankie Goes To Hollywood **owe a lot to sound sampling techniques.**

Super sophisticated samplers, which included complicated software for editing sounds and creating effects can cost tens of thousands of pounds. Consequently, they are beyond the reach of most people's pockets and are the preserve of professionals.

Datel's sound sampler for the Spectrum is available for a little under £50 and comes complete with a cheapo microphone and a cassette of software to drive the hardware. Overall, it represents excellent value as an introduction to sampling sounds and fiddling around with them under computer control. The musician, the keen games programmer and the general interest user could all have a lot of fun with Datel's product.

The hardware is excellent, capable of very good quality sampling and reproduction if you ignore the dinky little microphone that it comes with. Either feed in sound via a good quality mike, or use your HiFi if you want to exploit the sampler's full potential.

For the home user, the fact that the hardware unit accepts mini-jacks (those used on the Spectrum's cassette lead) is probably not too much of a pain. Anyone with the desire to do more serious work would probably want to install full size audio sockets on the unit, or at the very least buy a couple of converters. For under fifty quid, one can't expect all the bells and whistles to be available, but the provision of knobs to adjust gain and feedback would have been a nice touch and shouldn't have added significantly to the price. As it is you have to fiddle with the pots using a screwdriver.

But enough of this preliminary carping! What can the Datel do?

Well it's all down to the software. Once you set up your cables and computer and are ready to feed sound in to and out of the unit, the next step is to load up the accompanying software and start experimenting.



Four programs come on the cassette and the first provides an ideal starting point for some experimentation, providing a menu of options to choose from. You can record a sound into memory — sample it — and then play it back at varying pitches using the keys 1-9. Alternatively you can reverse the sound (play it from end to start) and then play it back over nine pitches. For amusement value there is a draw option, which displays a frequency plot of your sampled sound onto the screen. Amusement value, because you cannot then go on to edit it — but this ain't a twenty five thousand pound Fairlight.

Other menu options allow the sound to be played back with a rising pitch effect, echo, repeated playback and a chopped-off effect is created by a progressively faster repeat. Four different short sounds may be sampled and then played back using the 5,6,7 and 8 keys. Not quite Mr Copeland, but four finger drum solos are possible.

All the effects work well, although there is a slight problem with the scaling - the playback keys provide a non-tempered scale which raises the pitch of successive notes by the same amount, which isn't how the real musical scale works. A little annoying to the musical purist.

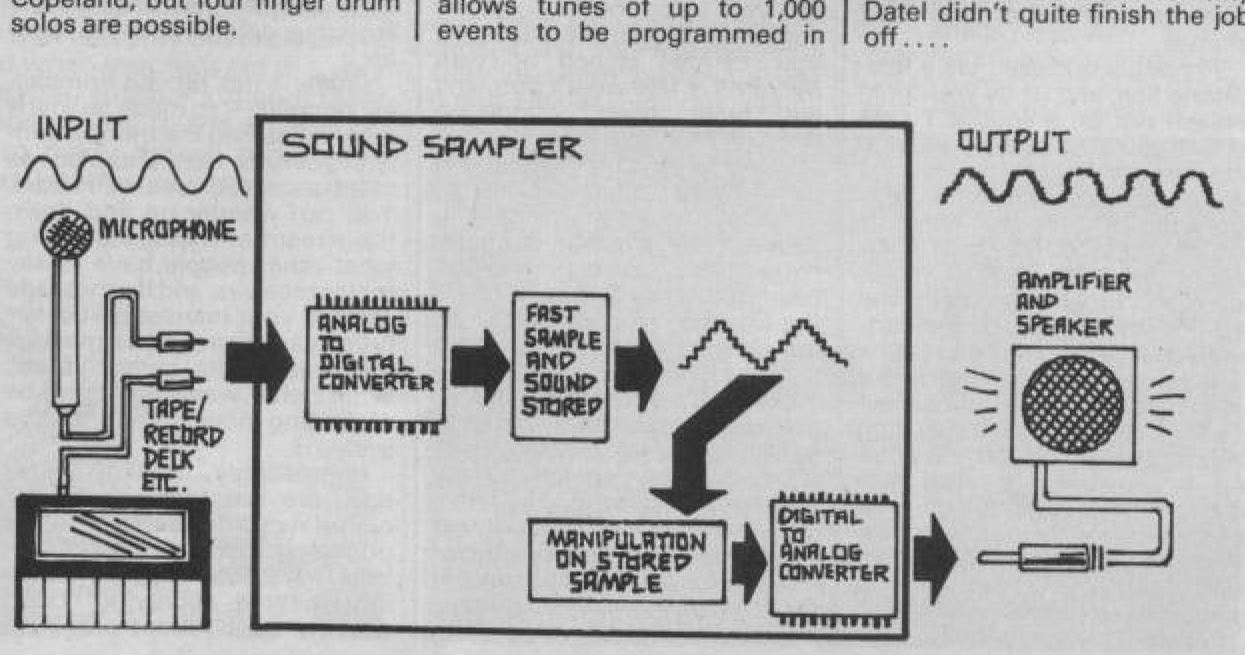
The second program, keys, allows a sound recorded into memory to be played back using the top two rows of the Spectrum keyboard to emulate a one-octave musical keyboard. You can hop up and down ten octaves, and while it is difficult to contrive to play a tune which spans several octaves, the pitch following was pleasingly accurate. A major deficiency was caused by a looping problem, however. If you press a 'key' down to sustain a note for longer than the sample length, then the note produced is not continuous. There's a pause every time the end of the sampled sound is reached, while the software cycles back to the start again.

The sequencer program allows tunes of up to 1,000 events to be programmed in step time, and edited as desired. Note time, pitch and octave are entered and then the whole tune can be played back using your sampled sound as the basis. In use, the sequencer was a pain to get to grips with — input was slow and a little tedious. Unless care is taken, the program has a habit of failing fatally. Fun, maybe for the masochist musician.

Games Speak allows you to sample up to eight short sounds and then access them from within your own games program. Alternatively, you can store a meaty four second chunk of speech, for instance, which could be neatly incorporated into an adventure perhaps. Not yet of vast commercial potential, as not too many people own Datel Samplers at present, but some interesting speech systems could be written for it, which could be of benefit to the disabled.

For fifty pounds Datel have produced a neat piece of hardware which, in the final analysis, is let down by the software it is supplied with. A little more thought on the echo facility software, for instance, could have provided a repeated echo which gradually fades in volume, or perhaps offered a chorus type effect which would have approached an automatic double tracking facility.

The instructions, which run to four A4 typed sheets, are less than succinct and fail to give any technical information whatsoever. The potential is there, however, for someone prepared to examine the listings of the programs which come with the unit and write some very clever routines for themselves. Pity Datel didn't quite finish the job off....



MICRONET

MODEMS OPERANDI

In which we start to examine what goes on, down the telephone line

The next time you throw a wobbly at your Spectrum for refusing to load your favourite game, or for crashing six points short of the million, have a heart. Don't you think the little beast might just be lonely, pining for the company of other computers?

Desperate for chipchat, it has been sitting there, watching all those millions of bits of chip-blowing chatter chuntering along the telephone lines, willing you to buy it a modem, plug in and get involved.

No wonder your Spectrum gets depressed, with the communications revolution passing it by! Now, we at the CRASH Clinic for Depressed Spectrums have commenced an in depth study of modem mania, and hope to be able to pass on useful snippets of information for the benefit of you and your computer. In Part One of Modems Operandi, Jeremy Spencer and Graeme Kidd take a look at Micronet - a growing corner of British Telecom's Prestel database.







Set up in 1979 (coincidentally, the last year Dash Ed allowed Lloyd Mangram to have a birthday), **Prestel** was the first large scale viewdata service in the world. Run by British Telecom, Prestel is a massive database containing some 350,000 frames of information many of which are used by independent Information Providers to publish electronically.

Unlike Ceefax and Oracle, the teletext services broadcast by the BBC and ITV, communication with Prestel is two-way. On Prestel, you can respond to invitations to order goods and can send messages to other users as well as just select and read frames.

Prestel is accessed via a telephone line, and while you could splash out on a special TV set which contains all the hardware needed, as a Spectrum owner it would be much more sensible to get hold of a modem which is capable of 1200/75 Baud operation. One such is the VTX5000, designed very much with Prestel and Micronet in mind, and currently available for around £50.

If you are really serious about joining the communications revolution, then a multi function Modem would be your best bet, which allows you to select from a range of Baud rates and even communicate according to the American Bell telephone standard, but you could end up spending a lot of money! If Micronet is your main interest, such a modem would be overkill.

Micronet was launched in March 1983 as a joint venture between British Telecom and EMAP, and from the start was intended as a service for the home computer enthusiast. Living inside Prestel, Micronet charges a subscription (£10 a quarter) which also allows you to go into the rest of Prestel if you wish. So what's it all about?

Like the rest of Prestel, Micronet consists of lots of pages of information which you wander through by keying in a number for the next page you want to take a look at. Using the service is rather like sitting down in front of a very large book and getting someone to turn the pages for you. CRASH signed up with Micronet a few weeks ago, and we have been wandering through its pages ever since — and still haven't explored all the possibilities it offers.

Perhaps the most entertaining facility offered on Micronet (when the Pandora computer hasn't got a headache, that is) is the Chatline service. When you join Micronet you are given a mailbox number — ours is 105845851 — and people can send you messages by going to a message sending frame, using your mailbox number as the address and typing in their text. This is all very well, but unless you know someone on Micronet, there's a limit to the fun you can have sending strangers messages. Chatline is the Micronet version of CB Radio and allows people to put a frame of information on general view.

Normally available between 6pm and midnight, Chatline lives at page 811 on Micronet and is rather like a moving bulletin board. Essentially there are up to 100 pages available for Chatline messages, with one message on each page. Everyone logged on to Micronet can look at the Chatline pages, and for 2p a time anyone can send an electronic message to the world via Chatline. As the 101st message is received by the Chatline controller it is added to the end of the string of pages and can be accessed by everyone else, and the 1st page in the stream is deleted to make room for it.

Chatline has proved immensely popular — so much so that it recently ousted the more worldly Cityservice from 2nd place as most accessed area of Prestel. You can wander up and down the stream of messages seeing what other people have to say for themselves, and if a message catches your interest particularly you can always sent a mailbox message to its author direct. What better way could there be of finding new friends on the system?

Interestingly, Chatline messages are not censored by the editorial staff as most other publicly broadcast information is, which leads to some interesting material appearing! Don't get any ideas about placing a few rude messages on the Chatline though — the Micronet staff are not above phoning up offenders and issuing warnings, or even disconnecting persistent offenders.

A whole range of services is offered on Micronet, from a news section which can be up-to-the-minute, literally, to advice on technical matters, quizzes, features and even an Agony Auntie! You can order hardware, software and even Tupperware by going to an advertiser's frame and keying in the response that asks them to send you the goods. Don't go mad though . . . you get charged for the goodies you've ordered on your quarterly Prestel Bill.

Software can be downloaded via the telephone line onto you own cassette and you can buy many of the commercially produced programs for a reduced price this way. There are also a number of programs which can be downloaded for free, which is a fun way of adding to your software library without typing in boring listings from boring magazines (dig dig!).

Page 8000011 is well worth examining — it contains the Index to the Spectrum Microbase, and all sorts of goodies relevant to Spectrum owners can be found from this page, including the famed Micro-Mouse, the world's most lovable electronic gossip columnist???? Geddit Squeaky!?!?

There are some 30,000 pages in Micronet, and the whole system is continually updated, with new features being added daily. Part of the fun of logging on to Micronet is to see what's happened since you were last online, and every time you sign on there's always a chance that there's a message waiting for you in your mailbox.

Hours of fun indeed, but what's it all cost? Apart from the quarterly subscription to Micronet and the phone bill, there's no access charge to Prestel or Micronet providing you don't want to log on during the peak times, which are 9am to 6pm weekdays and 8am to 1 pm on Saturdays. Peak time is painfully expensive — you'll be charged 5p for every minute you're on line by Prestel, and then there's the phone bill to think of.... Nearly everyone in the country can dial up Prestel on the local call rate, and if you're using the service while it's free, then an hour's connection should cost less than 50p.

See you on the 'Net soon folks...but please, no Hotline votes to our Mailbox... AAAARGH!



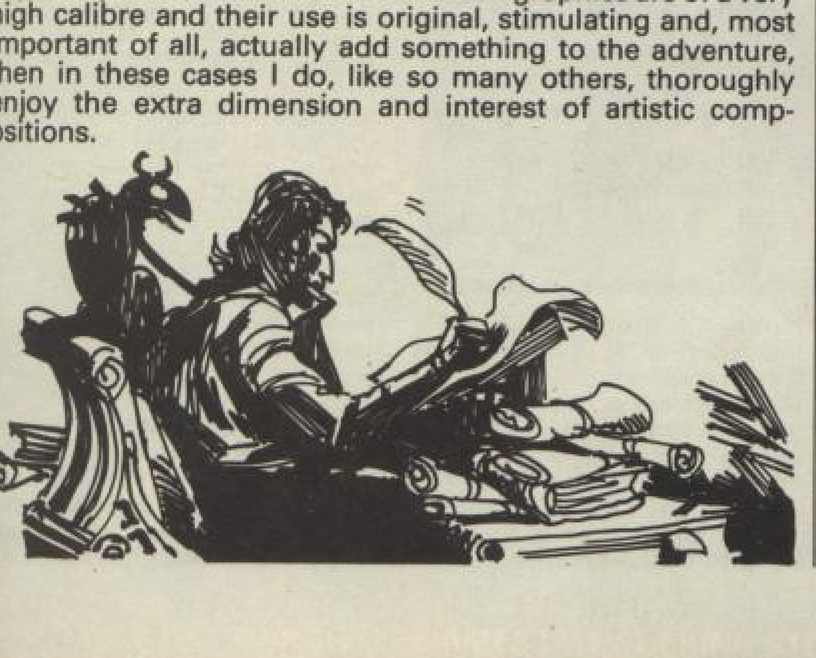


DEREK BREWSTER'S ADVENTURE TRAIL

GONNA WRITE A CLASSIC

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT IT? Here we are in blazing June (well it will be once this depression moves out into the North Sea) and the quality of games reviewed this month is very high. Could it be that the final shake out has begun — poor games just don't seem to surface anymore (much to my relief). If you are sitting in some attic beavering away on some distinctly average programming project then my advice is to forget it. To make an impact these days you must offer something new and preferably, radically new. On the face of it *Runestone* from Games Workshop, written by **Alan Davis**, is another *Lords of Midnight*. However, playing *Runestone* reveals many more facets to this game and many features that take it some way beyond *Midnight*. Similarly, on the face of it, *Gremlins* serves up the traditional Adventure International fare. However, some ingredients have been refined and spiced up. International's latest has semi-animated Gremlins agains a backdrop of pictures which must be the best graphics on the Spectrum. Further, actions are reflected in the pictures with drawers opening and closing, objects removed from pictures, swimming pools draining, and Gremlins blended, cooked and decapitated. *Witch's Cauldron* introduces your character to the location picture and, what's more, the character moves against the backdrop. Hence the cat must crawl along the window ledge until it is adjacent to the window where it can then enter the room.

What this all adds up to is a further homing in onto the areas which afford the greatest entertainment. Although I have in the past backed the view that text only adventures are superior *per se*, I must admit that when graphics are of a very high calibre and their use is original, stimulating and, most important of all, actually add something to the adventure, then in these cases I do, like so many others, thoroughly enjoy the extra dimension and interest of artistic compositions.



A CRASH Smash

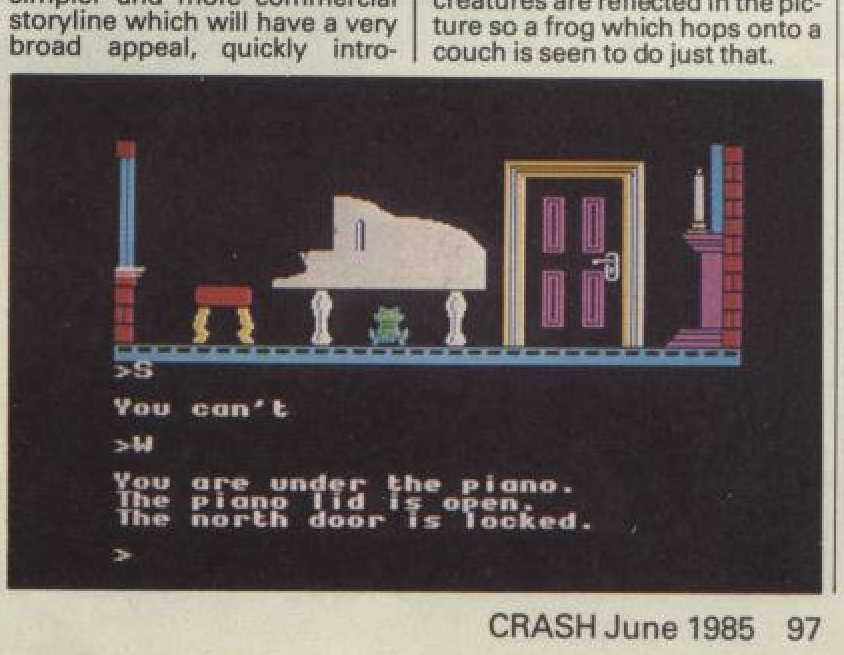
WITCH'S CAULDRON

Producer: Mikro-Gen
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**

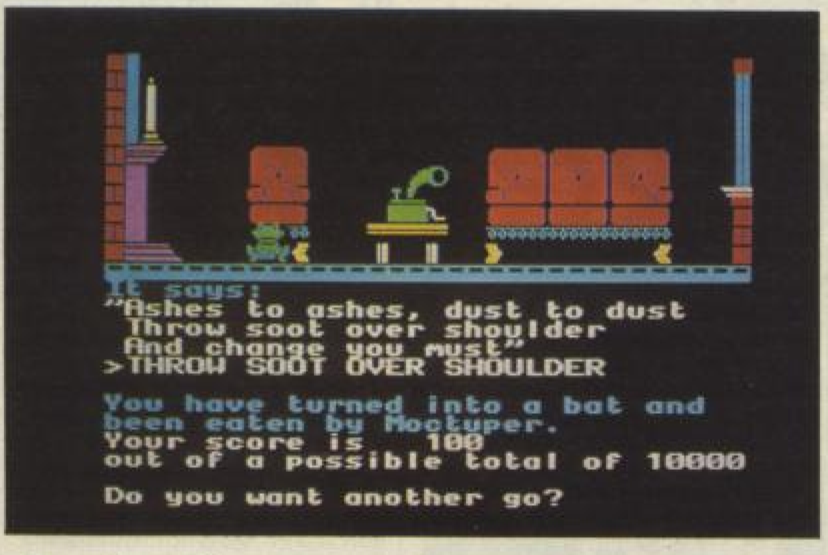
As far as I am aware (and, as it happens I am very aware due, in no small part to the flurry of free literature which still greets Neptune Software every morning) *(Derek had his own software company called Neptune —Ed)* Mikro-Gen have not to date released an adventure. However, there is no doubting the stir they caused in arcade with their brilliant Wally series and so the question is, have they brought the flair shown in those terrific games to the adventure scene. The answer, in short, is yes, the have.

If you are one of the many who read this column not through any great interest in adventure but more a canny desire to squeeze as much out of your CRASH as possible, then let me tell you this game does not have you cast in the role of a saviour of middle-earth or anything exotic. No, here we have a much simpler and more commercial storyline which will have a very broad appeal, quickly introducing a superbly presented adventure. When I say commercial, I mean this in the best sense of the word; you'll feel the not too exorbitant sum is worth it, so you too can enjoy this super game.

The Witch's Cauldron of the title is where you must mix the correct ingredients of a potion to begin the long task of righting the wrong the evil witch Hazel has inflicted upon you, namely turning you into a green slimy, but humanly intelligent toad. The path to your old human form is not an easy one as you must take on all the curious guises which eventually lead to your human persona and well-earned freedom. The different forms you endure early on include a toad, cat, ape and bat, and each is true to its own unique character so that a toad might hop through a gap closed to a cat, while the cat's agility easily allows it to negotiate a window ledge and so open a whole new area to investigation. Not only do these metamorphoses add a fresh angle to the game but also the various hoppings of the creatures are reflected in the picture so a frog which hops onto a couch is seen to do just that.







So you hop off from a location which varies each time you begin a new game (a feature which woke me up from the semi-comotose state which befalls all reviewers) and what is more, the objects and happenings also move around which very much reflects the thinking behind a game which does not wish to be seen as just another adventure. In the upper half of the screen is a picture of where you stand which is remarkable for its quality of design, bringing the clarity of arcade graphics to an adventure. Fuzzy shading has thankfully not been employed so pictures are a delight to behold as you ponder on your next move. And ponder you will, as the problems are superbly pitched into that perplexing, but engaging, area between lucid logicality and mind-frosting ingenuity. Once a problem is solved you quite rightly pat yourself on the back and reset your brain cells to TV mode happy in the belief that when called upon every brain cell can do its duty. It's that sort of game.

The vocabulary can be choosy over what it will accept, eg GET GOLD will not pick up a gold ring, but you soon get used to the sort of input the program requires and sometimes a prompt will point you in the right direction, eg GET SPOON very politely calls up 'There may be more than one of these, use the full description'. Corrected, you input GET SILVER SPOON. A list of useful words is listed in the precise instructions which neatly reside in the program itself and can be called up at any time. Sentence constructions include PUT THE WATER INTO THE CAULDRON and OIL THE SOUTH DOOR. Taking everything with GET ALL proves very useful, not least when the first time you realise you are carrying too much is when in a tricky moment you go and drop everything. It is in areas like these where this game has taken adventuring ideas and given them a twist making them fresh and interesting. Moving around is very fluid with IN, OUT, UP DOWN, taking your current persona whether frog, cat, ape or bat hopping, crawling, loping and flapping all over the place.

This adventure is not a long one but this is not a serious drawback as each location is of major import and has some bearing on the eventual track of the game. There is a super feeling of quality about the whole thing with graphics making up detailed and exquisite illustrations, puzzles which are a joy to pick over, and characters that behave true to form. *Witch's Cauldron* is a seething mass of puzzles and bubbles of fun.



COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite easy
Graphics: for each location & shows your character. Similar quality to the Wally series, very good
Presentation: very good static graphics and scrolling text
Input facility: allows full sentence
Response: instantaneous
General rating: an excellent and original adventure

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	8
Logic	10
Addictive quality	9
Overall value	10

GREMLINS

Producer: Adventure International
Price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Brian Howarth**

If I remember rightly, *Gremlins* was a box office smash sometime around Christmas, and chose to bring to life on film the little devils who get into the works of TV Newsrooms to give us all a laugh. I never thought I'd be sitting here (I always sit on the same seat when I write the column — I call it the woolsack) wishing I had seen some hyped up piece of celluloid, but it would certainly have helped me get into what makes these Gremlins tick.

Perhaps I'm getting old but I was surprised at having to kill Gremlins in this game — I thought they looked rather cute on the film trailers. Well, enough of the sweatshirts and car-stickers and on to this here adventure, and, all I can say really is it's just what you'd expect — a



Brian Howarth conversion which features some of the best graphics seen on a micro-computer, and the emptiness of a hollow beans tin when it comes to character interaction, supporting literature or innovative features. That said, I quite enjoyed playing it as the graphics provide compensation in full. Further, it is easy to play, if a touch unfriendly in which words it will or will not accept. To sum up, if you are not an adventure virtuoso, more an occasional dabbler, this game may well prove a worthy digression from the apoplexy of arcade.

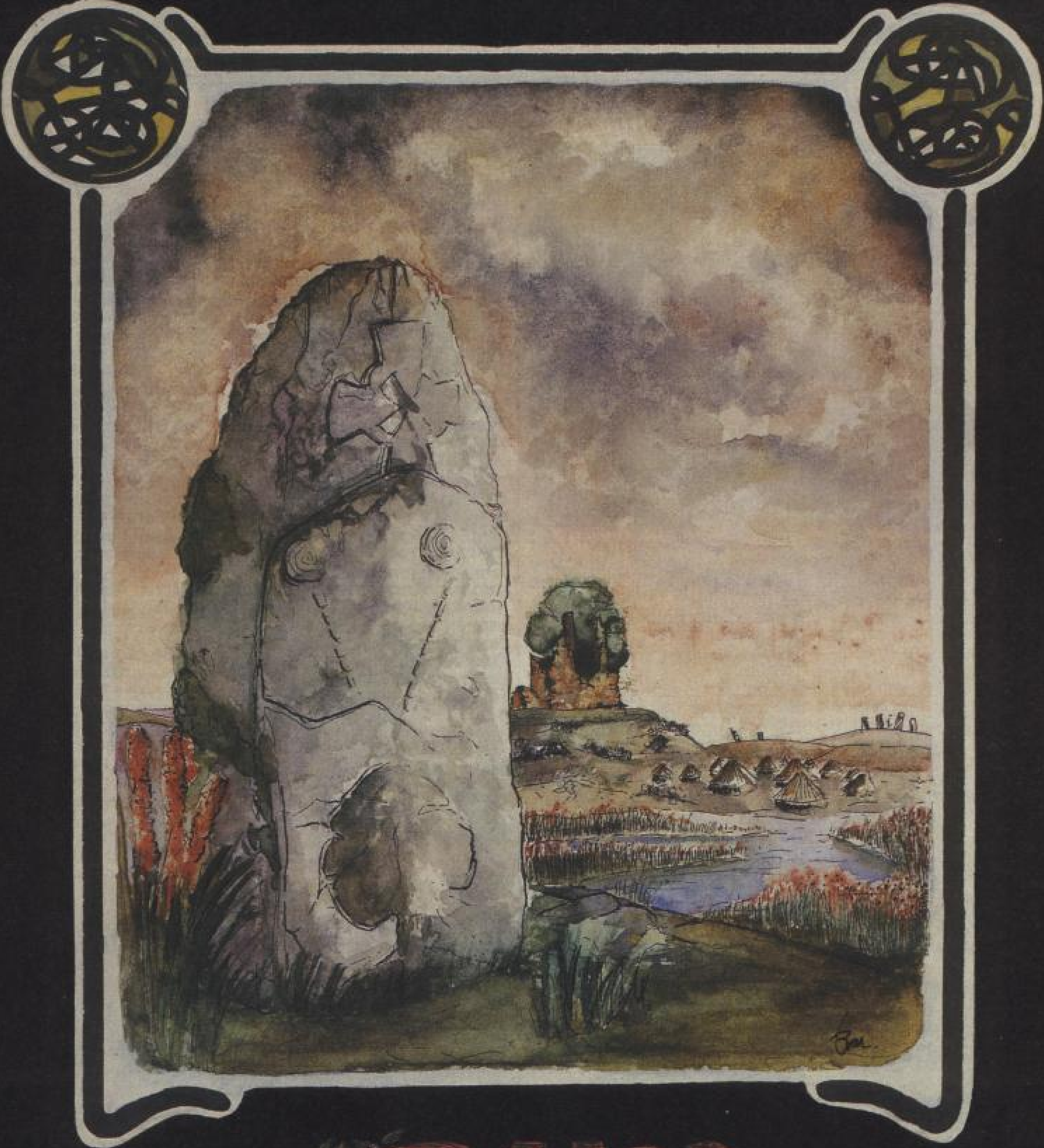
Here is the storyline, which will probably only make sense if you have seen the film.

Kingston Falls is in danger of being overrun with Gremlins. Billy has been tricked by Gizmo's offspring into feeding them after midnight. As with most things which might cause a mishap there are rules concerning how best to handle Gremlins. Keep them out of light, don't get them wet and never ever feed them after midnight (if any parent of budding programming talent is looking in on the column I would also proffer this advice, especially the last which, when not strictly adhered to, provides the ritual of washing up before breakfast). Nocturnal meals are not advised as the Mogwai pupate and turn into the evil Gremlins, and led by Stripe, the evillest of them all, cause chaos all over town. Taking the part of Billy, you take on the most perilous of missions. Aided by Gizmo you endeavour to save Kingston Falls from Being overrun by Gremlins.

If you don't want to know the solution to this adventure, then look away from the next two paragraphs. No really, only joking (mostly!). The first few frames (must switch this snooker off) in this adventure have you pitched against the cuddly meanies who have just popped out from their pods. In the very first frame a Gremlin is standing in the doorway hurling darts at you. This is the first of quite a number of two-stage animations (ie the meanie swings his darts arm to and fro) which liven up graphics that are so good they hardly need any livening up. Herein lies this game's strength as a piece of entertainment; if you are in to superlative graphics then you must check out this one, the pictures are truly state of the art. Stunning, no less.

You'll kick yourself on finding the solution when you lose two or three lives in the first location. Descent to the living room and another Gremlin bars your progress. Commendably your salvation lies in the graphic. Clues within pictures are not radically new, but when they are displayed with such clarity it must be worth a mention. A niggle you will soon notice is the way in which the text scrolls. On occasions you look up to find the first letter of your input lost as it was taken as the prompt to complete the scroll. Leaving the house and travelling the streets you see the skill of the computer artist extends to street vistas as well as house interiors.

Finding the garage you will have great difficulty starting the snowplough as I myself struggled for some time to no avail. If I'm not supposed to drive it away, then surely the door should be locked or the starter key missing. Simply not understanding ENTER PLOUGH etc just doesn't seem good enough. Now I've mentioned vocabulary, why doesn't the program under-



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stand PULL, HIT or even HELP when these words are listed under 'some helpful words'? I could supply many more examples of both weak, linear plot and poor vocabulary but suffice to say that a high price in computer memory has been paid in order to serve up the definitive graphics. The main problem is the limitation imposed by there being only one set path toward the final solution. With little effort expended diversifying responses to attempted problem solving or to EXAMINE commands.

Although I haven't mentioned this kind of thing for some time — the BBC and Electron versions do not feature graphics, while the Spectrum holds its own with the likes of the C64 and the newest big boy, the Amstrad.

Gremlins is a highly entertaining game with some of the best graphics you will see on a microcomputer. The plot hasn't got all the permutations it might, but what can you expect with such brilliant graphics stored in memory to flash on the screen in an instant. Don't be put off by the mark which must compare this adventure to all others, some of which have intricate plots and lengthy character interaction — this game is one of the best from Adventure International. It is such a jolly piece of software that if you don't normally play adventures you could do a lot worse than checking it out, the graphics will impress if nothing else. Overall I really rather enjoyed it and found the theme interesting, so much so, I think I might look up the film next time it comes round (though I draw the line at buying the tee-shirt).

COMMENTS

Difficulty: moderate
Graphics: on most locations and very good with some semi-animated Gremlins
Input: full sentences
Response: instantaneous
General rating: excellent graphics, but lacks intelligent responses

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	6
Logic	6
Addictive quality	7
Overall value	7.5

RUNESTONE

Producer: Games Workshop
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **BASIC and machine code**
Author: **Alan Davis**

Runestone was written by Alan Davis and I can't help wondering if it's the same name behind *The Journey* reviewed here in February. Comparisons between *Runestone* and *Lords of Midnight* are inevitable, but just as BBC2 quietly serves up the radical fare while Channel 4 is busy dodging the press flak, so this game stealthily steals up on the heels of *Midnight* to provide a really good jaunt for your money. This game impresses by expanding on some of the ideas seen in *Midnight* (in particular the landscaping of the Beyond epics) and blending them with the very best features of mainstream adventuring.

These features are significantly distinctive and their overall effect sufficiently far-reaching to distance *Runestone* from *Midnight*. *Runestone* is original enough to stand on its own merits and its flavour has the essence of Games Workshop, being well-designed and polished to a fine finish.

A game can be a good one whether it be played on a computer, on a playing board, or if scrawled out in the desert sand, and it is Games Workshop's experience in all modes of playing games which makes them adept at spotting and nurturing those ingredients they consider vital to computer games. A thesis might be devoted to what makes a good game but all the facts would point to one overall consideration — does the game work? Well, in this case, the answer is yes it does.

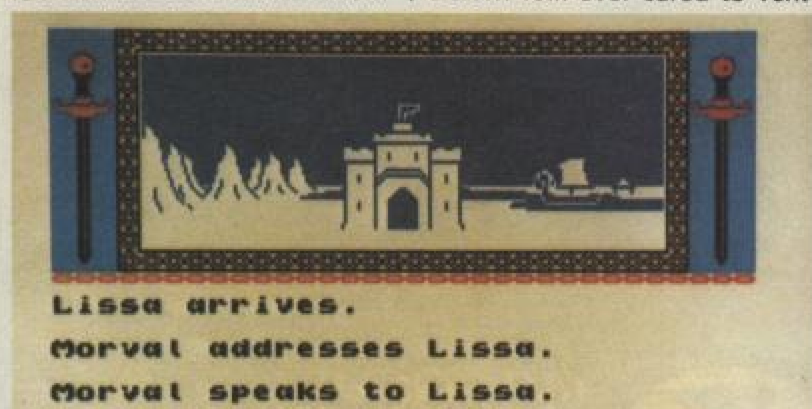
The buzz word in *Lords of Midnight* was landscaping and, not to be outdone, *Runestone* presents **venturescope** which combines real-time action, a full text interpreter, multiple command input, dozens of independent characters and 8,000 views from over 2,000 locations. You control three heroes in their main quest to crush Kordomir the Dark One, hopefully retreiving the long lost Runestone of Zaphir in the process. But in this we meet one of the many strengths of the game, namely its flexibility, and the truth is you can do whatsoever you like in the Lands of Belorn and the Northern Wastes. You can, and on your first journey no doubt will, spend much of your time exploring the countryside or meeting the various creatures who roam the lands. Or if in a vindictive mood, how about leaving all the quests to heroes and spend some time tracking and slaying every orc that ever walked the lands (but be warned, some orcs are as solid as animated tree trunks and will leave you a tired and hopeless prisoner).

I was trying to get through the rest of this review without mentioning **that game** again but, as in this instance, an analogy is worth a paragraph it is best to say that this adventure really is similar to *Lords of Midnight* in presentation. If the pictures appear simpler then this should not be taken as bad point as they are very pleasing in design and those depicting your voyages in the dragonships around the lakes and waterways are truly exceptional. The price you pay for such inspired ingenuity is the loss of the diagonal directions NE, SW etc, but the sense of fun you gain cruising around the waterways is well worth the minimal loss in manoeuvrability. Other departures from *Midnight* are the full sentence input (as opposed to the overlay option scheme) and the ability not only to approach fortified towers, pavilions and cave-dwellings, but to actually enter and see inside them too.

The comprehensive, full sentence analysis more nearly resembles that of a mainstream adventure so you can pick up swords, open chests and talk to other characters. These features along with the tremendous freedom to wander at will, reminds me of Bug Byte's *Twin Kingdom Valley* and perhaps it might be better to think of this game as bringing together some of the best features of both *Lords of Midnight* and the likes of *The Hobbit*.

It wouldn't be a Games Workshop adventure without some huge plot and intrigue but as usual it falls on the tasteful side of self-indulgence, and, given the nature of the game, contains clues to the whys and wherefores which dictate your fate. So, here are the salient points of the plot...

Long ago, before the coming of the Dark One named Kordomir, the land of Belorn flourished. They were proud but simple folk content to pass their peaceful lives beyond the great mountains. This was in the great age of the wizards who dealt in the mysteries beyond the ken of common man, and the elves, who wandered deep into the forests. To the north lay the inhospitable wastes where few Belorn folk ever cared to vent-



ure, so none suspected the great threat imposed by the orcs, trolls and demonic characters from that distant quarter.

When the fleets of dragon ships descended upon the gentlefolk to the south the lands were overrun. Wizards were slain, the elves moved on, and ancient treasures were carried off north by the orcs. Over the generations, the raids continued and the populations of Belorn dwindled. The ultimate victory of Kordomir seemed inevitable. Yet from this state of despair began the epic quest of Greymarel, Morval and Eliador who, with a fearlessness celebrated in countless ballads and tales, struck north into the wastes in a final attempt to destry the Dark One.

A map is provided in the booklet but in the best Tolkien tradition it is schematic (having been constructed from memory and folklore) leaving the detailed discovery of the terrain to the explorer, although the positions of the marked towers and huts are very much as you find them.

Playing the game seems very familiar, with you having control over Morval the Warrior, Eliador the Elf and Greymarel the Wizard. These controllable characters meet and sometimes enlist the support of others such as Brunor the Bold. A character who first attaches himself to Greymarel, and then later becomes a pain in the neck, is Skirmal the Sly, who seems to possess any item just when you are about to make some use of it. Not learning quickly how to deal with the threat this character imposes could leave you laughing at your own predicament as the silliest of orcs proceeds to run rings round you.

If you are not blowing your chances you should have a sword in the hand of Morval and a staff among the possessions of Greymarel the Wizard not so long after the off. I could tell you from where the characters start off but that would spoil the fun of seeing the map before you come to life. What can be said is you'll have to cross the Great Waters which divide the friendly south from the forbidding north sooner or later, and it is here you meet the dragonships. One particularly novel feature concerning the ships is the ability to sail them around with one character on the ship and to view them from the shore through the eyes of another. In this way you can actually influence the views through the actions of the characters — super stuff.

There is no doubting the first assailants to be met from the evil forces from the north. The orcs are brutish bullies who bring off quick raids on the south, then dart back to the safety of a fortified tower in the north. Working out how best to deal with this early threat will be your first major tactical problem. Trying to fathom which character is useful in any given situation will provide many more. Avoiding the orcs may seem the best policy, but in so doing you forfeit the chance of finding rich treasure chests and objects of great veneration.



You may find the constant 'Time Passes' which greets any pause in the action an annoyance at first but after just one game you will begin to realise the significance of this — every beat of the clock brings the marauding orcs closer, so much so, that when you return to continue with a character you may well find him ensconced within an orc-infested tower. Getting out of a well-guarded tower is anything but easy. Weapons are important (as is the hauberk, a long coat of mail) and the LIST command, which lists the possessions of the three main char-

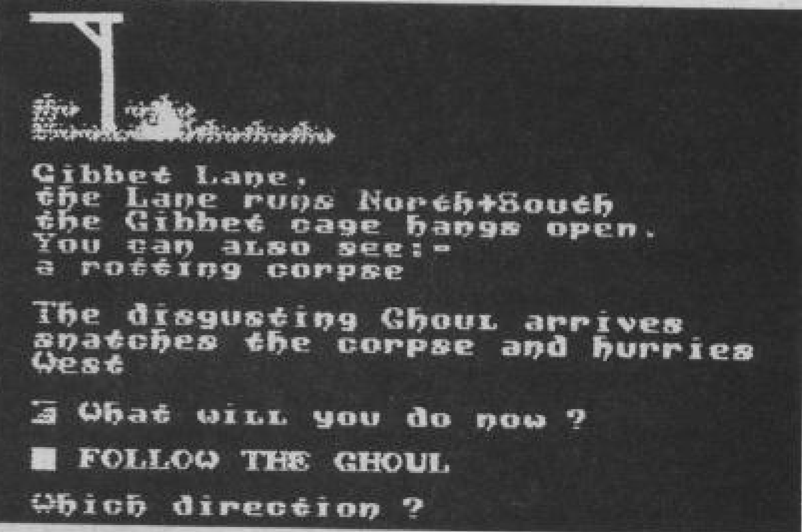
GHOULIES

Producer: IMS Software
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **Quilled**
Author: **D Whitelock**



In last month's CRASH I joked about writing a review live. That joke has now cracked up because I'm doing just that, sitting here typing out after my 'copy' date with May's CRASH lying beside me. The reason behind this slipshod attitude is not the snooker on the telly (although this provides the best background entertainment I can think of) but a problem which fills acres of Lloyd's letter pages — that is, how do you get the infernal program to load when some dimwit needs his head examining? After trying many tape recorders I selected the one which seemed the nearest to a load, turned its realignment screw fully and pushed down on it hard with the screwdriver as only in this way would this program load (about once in every three attempts). Persons about to submit software to The Trail please note.

I thought it worth the effort because this game is well presented, with a very attractive redesigned ye olde character sette, neat little graphics slotted in above the text, and providing a vast area to run around in and explore. Also, who knows what software will turn up in the shops in the months ahead. Although not credited as such it is in fact a Quilled game. Surprisingly, though, not all the available memory is used up, something akin to arrogance for a game which makes use of a programming aid.



There are no easy problems to get you into this game, in fact there aren't that many problems *per se*, a fact which made itself plain after I had played for over three hours and visited some 40 locations. The only problems after all that time were two locked doors and a deadly mummy. Any difficulties with these will not be eased with a useful HELP command — far from it, the program does not seem to understand HELP. Further, EXAMINE always gives 'There is nothing of interest'. The only object on these travels which appeared to be of any use was a spade — and digging with this proved impossible.

This summing up paragraph could have had some cheap joke directed at the title of this software, but that would not be in keeping with the tone of The Trail.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: very
Graphics: small token graphics on most locations
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: very fast
General rating: difficult to get into

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	5
Logic	6
Addictive Quality	5
Overall Value	**6**

RUNESTONE

acters, is very useful.

In battle, using the 'repeat last command' key (CAPS SHIFT and 2) can keep up the pressure on a flagging orc. (Incidentally, this command comes up with a 2 when you ask it to repeat something nonsensical).

Before summing up let me just say there were one or two areas which left me puzzled — like why defeated creatures disappeared along with their armoury, and, just how should you go about trying to get some weapon out of the grasp of an imbecile and into more skilled hands? All in all, most conceivable areas for criticism have been predicted, worked upon and ironed out. I suppose these criticisms are similar to those levelled at *The Hobbit* — wooden characters with an infuriating lack of control over them — but in this respect perfection lies some distance beyond 48K

Runestone is a significant addition to the games playing world. Its strength is its painstaking attention to detail which makes play so smooth and enjoyable. The scale, feel and difficulty of the adventure are pitched just right, always fascinating, always fun. Games Workshop are the masters of games design to the extent that you certainly don't feel you are the first person to have played the game — and with games as good as this you certainly won't be the last. Have fun.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy to play, but not so easy to complete
Graphics: good perspective of view in direction you are looking
Input facility: allows full sentences and speech
Response: about 4-5 seconds
Special features: 2,000 locations; perspective graphics; interactive characters
General rating: excellent value

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	7
Logic	8
Addictive quality	9
Overall Value	**9**

KEY OF HOPE

Producer: Games Workshop
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **Quilled**

Key of Hope is the successor to *Tower of Despair* reviewed in the December issue of CRASH. *Tower of Despair* received a good review mainly due to its coherent plot and its detailed drawings within a booklet which linked up with the text in a novel way. *Key of Hope* lacks many of the impressive features of that game and, rather curiously, introduces a sparse set of poor, full screen graphics.

True, it can now call itself a graphic adventure, but if this only serves to annoy the reviewer then where is the commercial sense in this? In the first 100 locations there are 4 full screen pictures. The inclusion of poor graphics will alienate the text purist while disappointing those who expect pictures, where they do occur, to be of the highest quality. The compromise seen here suits no-one.

Having given the low down on first impressions let me say this game is set in Aelandor and does carry over some of the good points from *Tower of Despair*. Whereas in that first game your character, the Warrior Mage of Castle Argent sets off east, here he is concerned with the Western Marches of Aelandor. Given the familiar starting point you are not allowed the familiarity of the character in *Tower of Despair*. In *Key of Hope*, the White Godess has summoned you to her aid in her fight against the tyrant Malnor, Demonlord of Darkness. But to do her bidding you are catapulted through time where your task is to seek the far-flung pieces of the Key of Hope, the last defence against the shadow of Malnor.

The curious feeling your character experiences in frame one is explained by the fact that you have changed into a new body. Under your new guise you seek the artefact so potent it could not be left to exist in its assembled form. You must find the key, assemble its four parts and use it before Malnor succeeds in his plan to ravage the entire world.

Ian Livingstone suggests this game is an attempt to bridge the gap between standard adventure games and role playing games. I wonder if this explains the curious repeat locations (gentle rolling plains, and grassland like an enormous green carpet) which loosely link up the areas marked on the map in the guide.

A disappointment is the way in which these repeated locations can end up in a mess. For example, dropping the Talisman in the Mountains of Undying Solitude can see a Talisman follow you around as you try to find a way out. This somewhat shatters the image of wandering and reminds the player its just the computer pushing up a repeat location description.

One unusual aspect on the plus side, is the ability to examine objects to the point of actually seeing them graphically on the screen. The game is short, but this is mostly compensated by the inclusion of two parts on the tape. The problems are fairly few and far between but those you do meet will certainly get you thinking.

Key of Hope retains the marvellous redesigned character set for its text as used in *Tower of Despair*, and some of the panache of that earlier game's guide. It is not necessary to have played *Tower of Despair* before attempting *Key of Hope*, but to be honest, someone who began playing with the latter game would be missing the better part of the tales of Aelandor.



COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite difficult
Graphics: on odd occasions and not really worth the bother, except for the graphics of objects which are fine
Presentation: very good, with old style writing
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: instantaneous, except where graphics are drawn
General rating: reasonable

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	7
Logic	7
Addictive quality	6
Overall value	6.5



Our Adventure Trail rating system is under attack again, this time by *Mike Roberts* from Okehampton, Devon, who writes:

I'd like to suggest a change in the Adventure Trail rating system, which at present is rather untidy.

Debugging in my opinion is rather a ridiculous rating, and more than half of the games you've reviewed got 10† 10 anyway!

I should like to suggest a graphics rating, wherever appropriate, and another for getting started and I don't see why only arcade should be rated for Playability and Addictive Quality.

I'm also against the Adventure Chart system — an ordinary voting method like the Hotline Chart would be more accurate. Adventures like** Lords of Midnight **are low down, not due to being poor but because a few people have underrated it. I also think** Tir Na Nog **and** Avalon **should be eliminated — surely these aren't adventures?

Well, see how I bow to public pressure, even from one person! Debugging bites the dust, Melbourne House breathe a sigh of relief. Actually, I've been thinking about scrapping it for a while — they just don't make bugs like they used to! It's now replaced by Addictive Quality which I suppose is relevant to adventures. As for Graphics, well it's not really definable for adventures is it? I mean what rating would you give a game with only a handful of excellent graphics — a high mark for the quality of the few or a low mark for the small number? I think this is best left to the comments section. However, Signpost is a democracy and as in any good democracy the wishes of the majority can be ignored! So let me know what you think!

As for your comments on the charts — well, I chose this system to make the charts totally sales independent. I mean there are millions of sales charts, all fiddled and full of overhyped games. An ordinary voting system ignores all the people who don't like a game and a top seller like *Valhalla* or *Eureka!* could achieve a top position with only a small fraction of the huge numbers of buyers voting for it. The system we have shows you which are the most liked games whether they sold 1,000 or 100,000.

As I've received many requests for help and many letters offering the solution to the arcade adventure *Avalon* I've decided to publish a rather comprehensive letter sent in by **T Ackerley** of York. However, I think the letter should really only be read if you are stuck. I've marked the end of this letter by a row of asterix.

If you want to end up with a high score, never get killed. This can be achieved fairly easily but to make sure after completing a section of the game, use the SAVE command. To stop being killed, through the game you will find various points where you can replenish your energy as many times as you want — the star (detailed in February's CRASH), the mushrooms in the Caverns of Doom, the flashing balls in the Great Halls of the Deep, in the Labyrinth and the Catacombs of the Undead.

The spells and objects needed to finish the game are Amulet, Wraithbane, Chalice (which are spells) and Caliburn (a sword). Amulet is found in a locked room under a trapdoor in the Catacombs of the Undead. Chalice is found using the Reveal spell, in the Goblin Warren in a locked room to the right of a room with a skeleton in (Reveal is in the skeleton). Wraithbane is obtained from the Warlock in the Great Halls of the Deep and is got by giving the 'yellow object' to the Warlock. The 'yellow object' is the same kind of object as that needed to obtain the flashing star on the Gatehouse level. Caliburn is found in the labyrinth. Find the room with the Lady's head in, then go through the door to the left of this lead and into the next room which has a crab in. Kill the crab and then use the find spell to get Caliburn. This sword is very useful as it kills nearly everything that moves!

To actually finish the game you will need to be on the Chambers of Chaos level. On this level you will find 4 fairly large disks in various places. Collect these and take them to the room which has a pattern on the floor. Move each disc over this pattern (in a certain order) and a door will appear. Going through this door will take you to the High Temple of Chaos, but make sure you have the four required objects as this is the point of no return! Go right through four rooms until you come to a large object then move Caliburn over this object and hey presto, you've done it!

* * * * * * * * * * * * *



For those new to Signpost, the solutions to the problems are encoded simply by rotating each letter one space forward through the alphabet. To decode simply rotate one space backwards, O becomes N, N becomes M etc.

Level 9 games are always popular, in their new adventure, *Emerald Isle*, **David Johnson** from Yorkshire is finding his progress blocked by the giant spider. Try **UISPX HMVF**.

In the old favourite *Mountains of Ket*, **Lee Housden** is having difficulty getting the map without killing the Cartographer. To do this you will need to **DIPQ MPHT, HJWF MPHT**.

Mike Burkey is having trouble launching the boat in *Kentilla*. To do this **QVMM CPBU**. Continuing, **Billy Smith** of Stafford has been having trouble finding anything to use to bail out water from the sinking boat. You will need the **DIBMJDF**.

In the same game **Terry Andrews** finds progress impeded by Zalrogs. I'm afraid they can't be killed in combat, but the Death Beetles can help you!

In *Espionage Island*, **Chris Hopewell** is having difficulty crossing the crevasse. You will need the **CSBODI**. Take it to the crevasse and **ESPQ JU**.

Michael Sum from Ashford, Kent is having difficulty with *The Hulk* and asks:

How do I escape from the Underground room, what can be done with the Energy Egg and how do I pull the ring in the dome?

To prevent the egg from exploding **FBU JU**. Then to escape from the underground room **TDSBUDI XBMM. SFNFNCFS OJHIUNBSF. HP DSBDL**. To pull the ring **SFNFNCFS OJHIUNBSF XIFO IVML, XFTU, QVMM SJOH**. These solutions have been supplied by **Ian King** from Tipton.

Fantasia Diamond is proving elusive for **M Beaty** of Newcastle upon Tyne who is having difficulty opening the panel or using the lever. To open the panel **PQFO QBOFM, FYBNJOF QBOFM, QVTI SFE CVUUPO**. To pull the lever you will need help from **CPSJT**.

In *Runes of Zendos*, **S C Lane** is having difficulty defeating opponents of similar strength—Vultus and ilk. I'm afraid they cannot normally be defeated in combat, you will need to give them the object they require; give the meat to Vultus for example.

In the popular arcade adventure *Tir Na Nog*, **Phillip Nicholos** is having problems passing the Sidhe in the Stormcave. I'm afraid I haven't played this game, however **David Johnson** from Rotherham tells me one way to pass is to let the Sidhe kill you, wait until he goes and then press symbol shift 6 then press I. I must admit, this sounds like cheating!

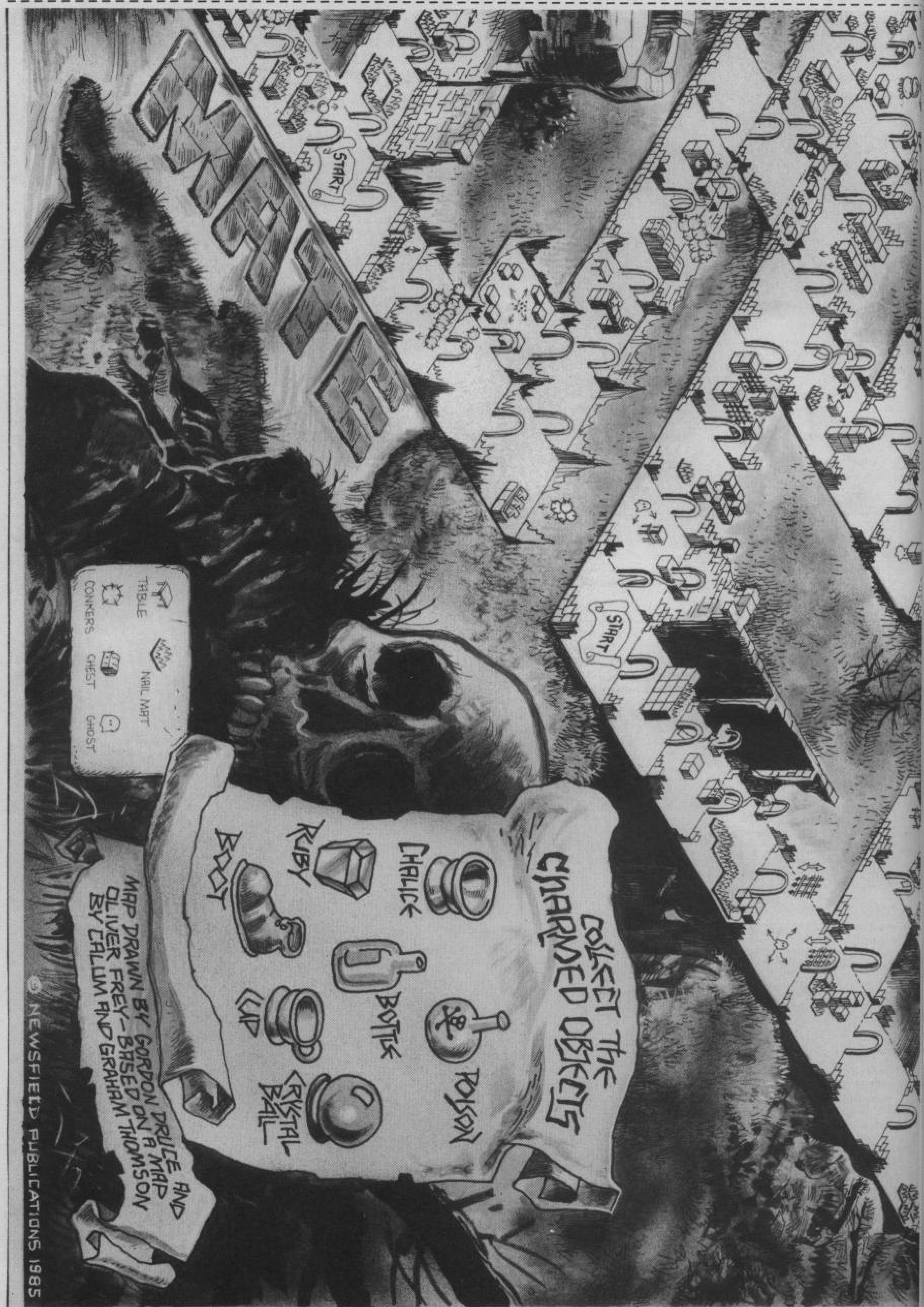
S J Scott is unable to pass the Giants in *Velnor's Lair*. You must run when they chase you, when they are on the bridge — say the magic word.

I have had several requests from Hobbits unable to find Gollum's ring. First you must get captured by the goblins. From the prison cell ask Thorin to open the window and carry you east. Then go SW, E, N, SE, E, the ring should be here, wear ring and go N, D, N, wait for the goblin to open the crack so you can escape.

In *Urban Upstart*, **Paul North** is having bovver finding the boots. They are, of course, in **UIF CPY JO UIF EFTFSUFE CVJMEJOH**.

This months £12 software prize is won by **T Ackerley** of York for his tips on Avalon.

CUT ALONG LINES AND JOIN TO PART ONE OF MAP ON PAGES 52+53





Crash back

After last month's absence (even CRASH people need breaks) ROBIN CANDY and BEN STONE return to examine some of the reviews published in in issue 7.

AUTOMANIA
(Mikro-Gen)



Automania heralded the coming of WALLY WEEK and of the HYPER load. Basically the aim of the game was to collect the pieces of the various cars and put them together. The problem with this was that your a WALLY so nothing is simple even the BP cans have turned against him and Wally must beware of the malevolent tyres. The game is played over two screens, one screen where you get the various parts of the car and the other where you assemble it all. As more and more cars are assembled the first screen gets increasingly difficult. There are ten cars to be built the first a 2CV and the last being a Rolls Royce.

Automania *is a straightforward platform game, which even by today's standards is pretty good. The graphics have never really been bettered by any other platform game, they are big and clear, though there are a couple of attribute problems. The sound was pretty good with a continuous tune throughout the whole of the game. Probably one of the best features of the game were the credits that rolled up the screen at the beginning of the game.* Automania *is still one of the best platform games around and worth buying.*
RC

Automania still outshines many of today's software. Its graphics are well animated and there are few attribute problems, which still corrupt many new games.I think it's a little less playable and addictive than it was eight months ago. Nobody has, as yet, tried to copy the idea behind *Automania* and if they do they will have to try very hard to better it. If you want a good game to start off your software collection BUY *Automania.*
BS

(Rob) The ratings for *Automania* still stand really, in fact it may have been a bit underrated.

(Ben) I wouldn't argue much with the ratings perhaps 2% off playability and addictive qualities, and I'd knock a couple of % off the value as well.

General rating: very good to excellent, playable and addictive.

Use of computer	92%
Graphics	89%
Playability	86%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	91%
Overall	88%

Full Throttle
(Micromega)

The best way to describe *Full Throttle* would be a 'Pole Position on motor bikes'. For those of you who have never heard of Pole Position (?) the basic idea of the game is to race around the track avoiding the other vehicles and be first across the finishing line. There are 10 tracks to choose from and each have to be tackled in a different way. The best track to start off on is Silverstone. After you have selected a track you must select the number of laps you wish to race. You can now decide whether to have a practice run to get familiar with the track (there are no other bikes to race against if you select this option) or start the race. You start the race at the back of 39 other bikes which roar off into the distance if you are not quick off the mark.

Full Throttle *is still the best racing game around — even the game from which it originally stems wasn't a match for it. The 3D graphics are breathtaking and the scrolling of the track is brilliant. There isn't much sound used but a game as good as this doesn't need it. Words just simply fail to describe* Full Throttle *it's great!*
RC

Full Throttle by Micromega was, to say the least, a pleasant surprise to us at CRASH. It still looks very good today and is undoubtedly the best racing game for the Spectrum. The much praised graphics are still excellent compared to today's software even though they are a little jerky at slow speeds. After a while I'm sure *Full Throttle* loses its playability but I'm still hooked.
BS

(Rob) If I was forced to change any of the ratings I would put Addictive qualities UP by about 5% otherwise they all still apply today.

(Ben) I wouldn't really quarrel with any of the ratings, perhaps even a few % onto the graphics mark.

General rating: excellent.

Use of computer	94%
Graphics	88%
Playability	95%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	85%
Value for money	90%
Overall	91%

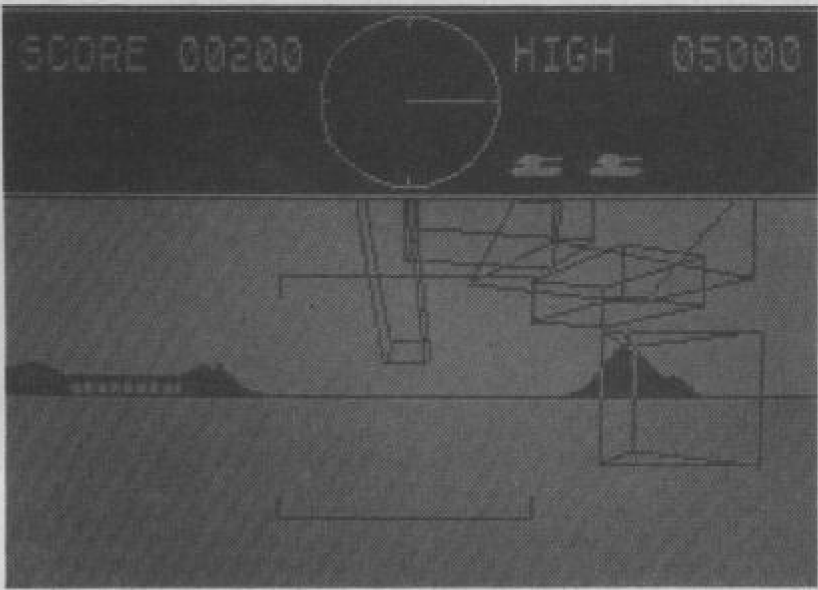


3D Tank Duel
(Realtime)

Most people are familiar with the 'Battle Zone' type of game first seen in the arcades many years ago. *Tank Duel* was practically a straight copy of that game except it differed from other Spectrum versions because it used colour quite extensively. The idea behind this game and all other 'Battle Zone' variants is to just shoot anything you see and this goes on forever. There are several types of tank in *Tank Duel* and each has its own characteristics, so different strategies are needed to destroy them.

To me *Tank Duel* is the best game of its sort around for the Spectrum mainly because it looks different from all the other versions of the same game. The graphics are good and colour is used well except some times when it obscures your view of an enemy. Personally this type of game doesn't appeal to me but if you do like a 'Battle Zone' type of game then this is the one for you.
RC

I was a little disappointed with 3D Tank Duel *as the review of it stated that it was the best 'Battle Zone' type game on the market at the time. I preferred* Rommel's Revenge *by Design Design as I found it slightly more playable. This game has very good vector graphics which still look good today although it has to be said that they were slightly confusing. The sound wasn't very convincing (only the constant drone of a heavy engine). However, I did enjoy playing* 3D Tank Duel *as it was a very close copy of 'Battle Zone', one of my favourite arcade games.*
BS



(Rob) I don't think the ratings should be changed as the game is as good now as it ever was, and no one has bettered it.

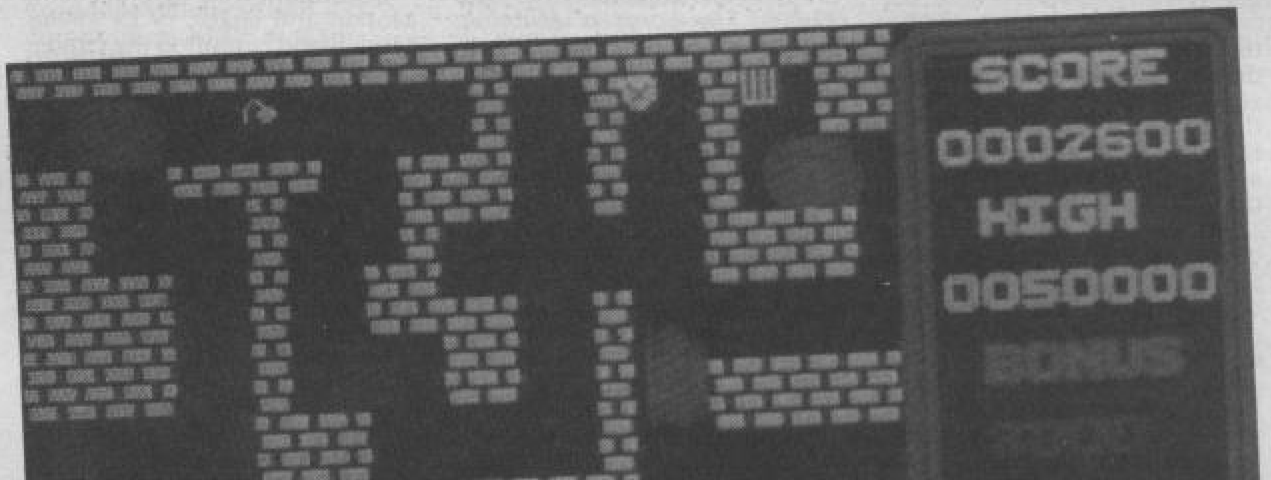
(Ben) I thought the ratings were quite fair except for the Addictive Qualities which should go down by about 8%.

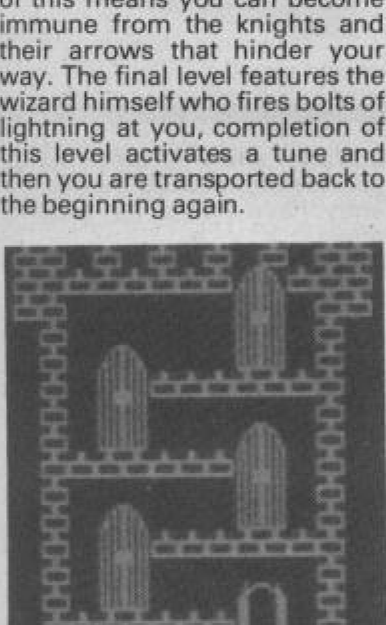
General rating: playable, addictive and very good value.

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	86%
Playability	83%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	82%
Value for money	81%
Overall	83%

CAVELON
(Ocean)

Your part in *Cavelon* is that of a gallant knight who has to rescue Guinivere from the evil wizard at the top of a tower. You start on the lower floors and by collecting the bits of the door you can gradually make your way up the tower. All the parts of the door are scattered around a scrolling maze along with other items such as shields. Every now and then the sword Excalibur appears in the maze, collection of this means you can become immune from the knights and their arrows that hinder your way. The final level features the wizard himself who fires bolts of lightning at you, completion of this level activates a tune and then you are transported back to the beginning again.





When Cavelon *came out it was a very good game but now looking back I don't think it would warrant more than a couple of goes before becoming boring. The graphics are good but the scrolling is awful, it affects the sound and looks terrible. Playability is reasonable but addictive qualities are practically non-existent, especially when you consider all you have to do to get to higher levels is type JSWILLY and type the number of the level you want to get to.*
RC

Cavelon was a very simple idea made into a tough game. Its graphics were quite good at the time but compared to today's standards they're only fair (nice animation though). The game is a simple maze game with fairly low playing appeal. I didn't think much of *Cavelon* eight months ago and I still find it just as boring as it ever was.
BS

(Rob) Most of the ratings are okay except perhaps Addictive qualities and Playability which I would lower by about 30% each.

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	86%
Playability	88%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	88%
Overall	86%

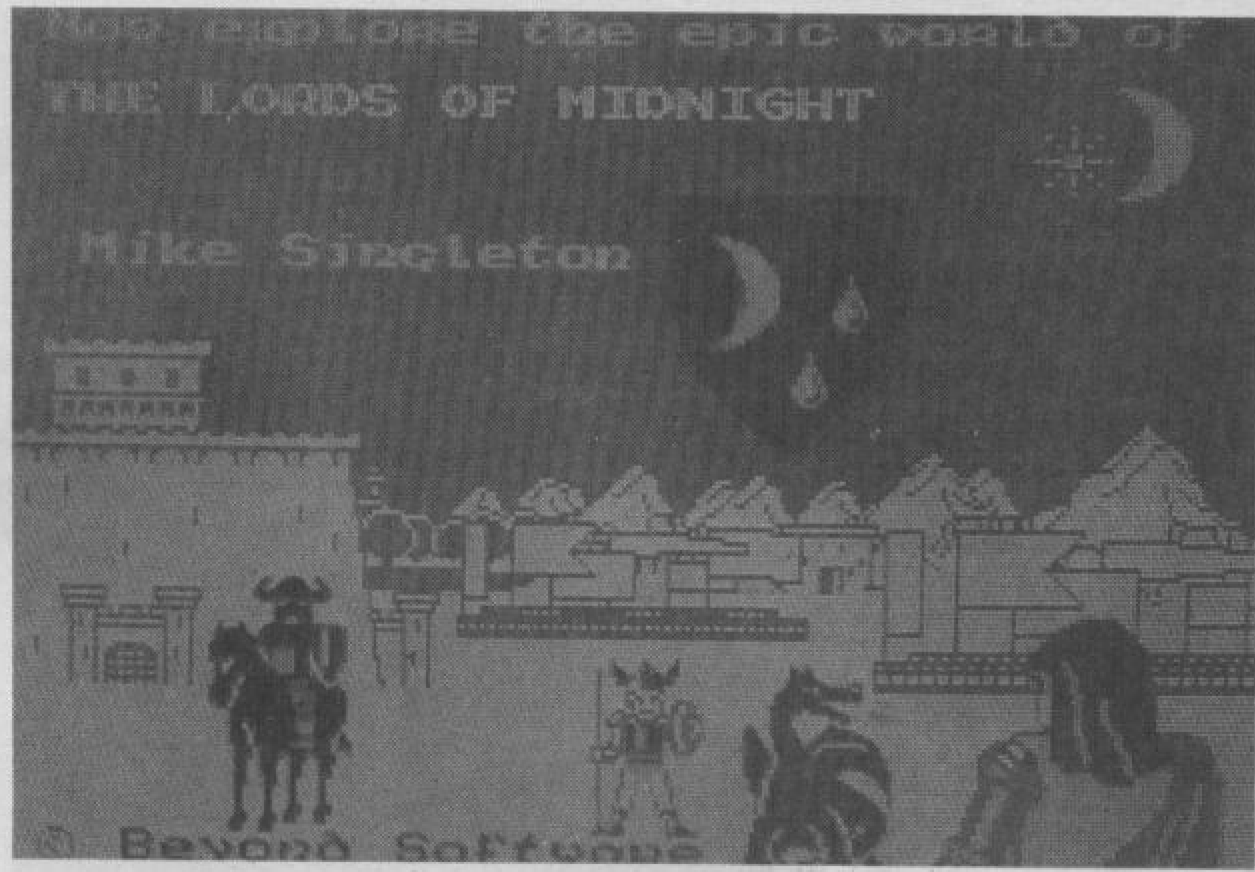
(Ben) I would put all the ratings down by about 5 %.

Kosmic Kanga
(Micromania)

Kosmic Kanga was a CRASH Smash in issue 7, but there is very little point doing more than to recall it since Micromania inconveniently went bust a couple of weeks ago, and at the moment we don't know the availability of their programs, including the recent *Project Future*.

Crash back

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT
(Beyond)



As this is strictly speaking not an adventure it is reviewed in this section because it owes much of its success to the arcade players that bought it. Only one person is re-reviewing it due to Ben Stone's loathing of any game that may require limited intelligence.

The Lords of Midnight was heralded by many as THE game for the Spectrum because of its totally new approach to gaming. The lavish booklet details the events leading up to the game and sets the scenario for what you are to expect from the game.

The story behind the game is that the evil witch king Doomdark prepares to capture and enslave all of Midnight. As Luxor the Moonprince you ride out from the tower of the moon with a few companions to try and thwart his efforts.

The game begins at the dawn of the winter solstice outside the tower of the moon. With Luxor, chieftain of the free lands of Midnight, are Rorthron the Wise, Corleth the Fey and your own son Morkin. From the tower of the moon you must guide your four initial characters around Midnight to muster an army to overthrow the evil Doomdark. Luxor can recruit from the Lords of the Free, Fey and Utarg. Not all will rally to your banner and many need a special character such as Luxor present before they will join forces.

Probably the most striking feature of the game is the panoramic views of which there are 32,000. *The Lords of Midnight* used a new programming technique appropriately called 'Landscaping'. You view the game through the eyes of the character you are controlling and as you move about distant features get bigger until you eventually arrive at them.

Doomdark may be destroyed in two ways. First by finding the Ice Crown from which Doomdark's weapon, the ice fear, emanates. The Ice fear saps your warriors' strength and, as Doomdark's men capture citadel after citadel the ice fear gets stronger. If the ice fear gets strong enough your men will refuse to go into battle and may even join Doomdark against you. The other way to defeat Doomdark is by capturing his home citadel of Ushgarak. This is the harder of the victories to obtain and requires recruitment of many lords.

Doomdark wins by first killing Morkin and Luxor, or by killing Morkin and capturing the citadel of Xajorkith, the base citadel of the free. As long as Morkin is alive the game will continue.

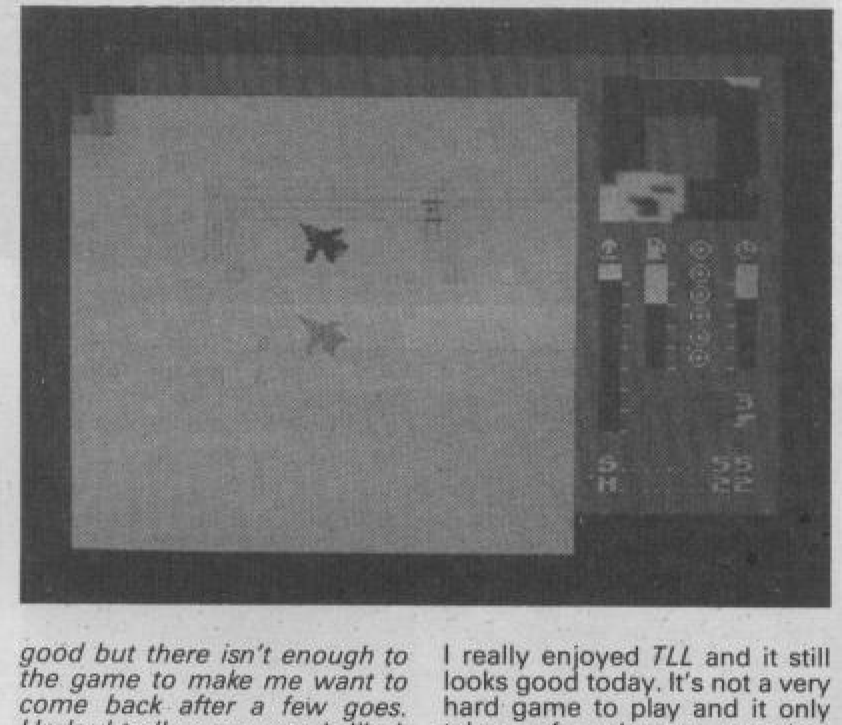
When *Lords of Midnight* was first released I thought it would be a bore, it wasn't until I had played it to death that I realised it was probably the best thing that ever happened to the Spectrum. What makes the game so good is the atmosphere created in the booklet. Even when you have finally completed the game it is still very addictive because you want to explore the land of Midnight. Another novel feature of the game is that you can have more than one person playing the game at a time, which makes *LOM* as a proper role playing game. The best way to sum up *LOM* is if you haven't bought it yet go out and buy it now! Oh just a foot note to those of you who like comparing Spectrum games against CBM games, the Spectrum version is a lot faster and in my opinion better.
RC

(Rob) Midnight is still a hit!!

his grasp. He had the ice Crown.

Difficulty	8
Atmosphere	10
Vocabulary	N/A
Debugging	10
Overall Value	10

TLL
(Vortex)



TLL was one of the first games where you operated a plane but it wasn't a simulation. The idea behind the game was to fly low over the landscape and destroy the enemy targets, the lower you flew the more likely you were to destroy. At the beginning of the game you are given a quick glimpse of the whole of the playing area and the locations of the targets. The whole game is presented in 3D and you saw the action from slightly above your craft. Once you have destroyed the first six targets another six appear but in places that are harder to get to. At any time during the game you can land and refuel but you must have sufficient space on the runway to be able to stop the plane.

I was never really kean on TLL *because I always thought there wasn't much to it. Today* TLL *seems just as boring. The graphics are good but the sound is poor. Playability-wise* TLL *is good but there isn't enough to the game to make me want to come back after a few goes. Undoubtedly some people like it (that has been proved with its success in the Hotline charts) but to me the graphics are the best things in the game.*
RC

I really enjoyed *TLL* and it still looks good today. It's not a very hard game to play and it only takes a few days to complete (once you've got used to the keys). It hasn't got the lasting appeal that most of today's games have so *TLL* becomes unplayable and a little monotonous after a few goes. The 3D effect was good but 3D games recently have had a far superior effect.
BS

(Rob) As far as its ratings are concerned the one that would suffer the most would be its Addictive qualities which would go down by about 20 to 25%

(Ben) I wouldn't really quarrel with any of the ratings, except addictiveness and playability, these would go down by 5 and 4% respectively

...rating, playable, addictive and different, generally recommended.

Use of computer	83%
Graphics	79%
Playability	85%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	84%
Value for money	84%
Overall	81%

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS



THE JUMPERLESS KID SORTS THROUGH . . . .

or is that Kidd?

Okay, it's results time again bozos — and I note that quite a few of you ant-brained slimesters have had some difficulty in working out what the MULTIPLE ENTRY concept is all about.

Well, it's to save you postage if you want to enter more than one competiton. Put each competition entry in an envelope or write it on the back of a postcard; make sure you've written your address on each of your entries and put all the envelopes into another one addressed to MULTIPLE ENTRIES, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

DON'T include money or cheques for mail order, back issues etc (contributions to the Jumper Fund would be much appreciated but not forthcoming I suppose — all you're interested in is winning, I know, I know).

You are only allowed to enter each competition once, so MULTIPLE ENTRY doesn't mean you get three zillion tries at each comp. We can spot a fast one a mile off you know, up here in CRASH Towers. F'rinstance, Competition Creep of the month award for the March Issue goes to **Stephen Nye**, of Nunnery Road, Frome who sent no less than sixteen entries for the *Gyron* competition, had eleven tries at the *Bruce Lee* Wordsquare and sixteen bashes as the Crash Quiz.

Hard Cheese Steve — like everyone else who tried that particular variation of MULTIPLE ENTERING in our March, April and May issues, only one of your attempts went forward to the draws for each competition. *(However, unknown to the Comps Ed, fate has dealt a foul blow — for Stephen Nye was drawn in this month's Hotline page! -ED)*

Lots of other people tried the same scam, and a few of you went to the bother of sending in half a dozen entries to the *Bruce Lee* competition, each in a separate envelope but all posted on the same day, in the same letter box. You'll have to be smarter than that to slip past my beady eye me lovelies!

Enough moaning (and no, Steve, you can't have a freebie T shirt for being the March Issue Nerdline winner). On with the resultipoos . . . .

First off, let's catch up with the winners to the **Sir Clive Sinclair/ Lord MacMillan caption competition which was the CRASH QUIZ in issue 14 — March 1985:**

Top three captions were sent in by: Lewis Cohen, Saxon Road, PE7 1NP with 'I know it's easy your Lordship, but you're playing the loading screen'; **Chris Beck** of Grattan Street S61 2JR trotted out 'No Sir Harold, a Microdrive is not a narrow path leading up to your front door'; and **Derek Buckle** of Epsom Drive IP1 6SS got into the top 3 with his snide 'It's got more usable memory than the whole of the Commons your Lordship'. Well done you three, £25 of software and a tee-shirt each.

Runners up (tee-shirts and no software) were **Neil West** of Beechfield Road, SN13 9DW; **Martin Bell** of Shore Road (bit sea-y eh?), BT22 2RP; and **L D Appleyard** of Liverpool Road South. Liverpool.

Auntie Carol, our mail order queen will be sending you claim forms in due course.

Owing to the the nefarious activities of a certain computer in the CRASH office, the winners of the **GYRON COMPETITION** never quite made it to the results page last ish, and we print it here now. Firebird have had their copy and although Herbie fell off his comfy chair when he realised what James had let him in for, he's probably just about recovered from licking the stamps and sticking them on the Gyron envelopes which the following lucky people will have received.

Saul Akerman, Islandsmead 3TG; Andrew Barron, Rippon Crescent S6 4RG; Alan Bennett, Benham Hill RG13 3HL; Simon Broder, Marley Crescent SR5 5BL; J Bryden, Gartcraig Road, Glasgow; Steven Cheung, Castle Street, Isle of Man; Christopher Cousins, Bishopsthorpe GV35 8JW; D J Cowie, Mansfield Hotel BH2 5HL; David Culhane, Andilaun, Co. Dublin; Kevin Devine, Thornhill YO11 3LY; Tom Fisher, Lucketts Close CB4 4HG; R Fowler, Aylesbeare SS3 8AE; Keith Giscombe, Longmead SG6 4HR; M A Griffiths, Rosemary Road BH12 3HA; Chris Hall, Sunnymede Drive, IG6 1JV; Robert Hancock, Beauchamp Avenue B20 1DT; J Harvey, Sawley Road 3EF; Alan Johnston, Lincoln Avenue G13 3PZ; Ian Kennet, Dunstable Road LU4 8QP; Paul Lauff, Rose Close NN14 2TA; I McAuliffe, Westcommon Grove AL5 2LL; Iain Mantle, Wye Close, Warwickshire; J Marsden, Cedar House 2SD; J K Marston, Beaufoys Ave BH22 9RH; Darren Metcalfe, Eden Park Avenue BR3 3JN; Keith Milner, Caird Avenue CA3 9RR; A D Munn, Cherry Tree Close RH14 9NG; J Murphy, Risingholme Close HA3 7ET; Carl Myhill, Southbourne Grove SS5 5EB; Mary Neill, Burnfoot House FK6 6JQ; Stephen Nolan, Hahnemann Road L4 3SA; Robert Norton, Paget Road, WV6 0DX; Nick Page, Latchmere Road KT2 5TP; Alan Rowlands, Ynyswerdd SA4 1AR; Paul Sadler, Dales View Road IP1 4HL; George Sandow, Coniston Road, Kent; Bryan Scott, Beech Grove NE9 7RD; Michael Slater, Wood Top BL0 9EN; Michael South, Karen Drive BS19 3JT; C J Southwell, Maida Vale Crescent CV3 6GD; Dominik Szewczyk, Trap Lane S11 7RD; Guy Tambling, Dyers Lane BS17 1XT; J Tunnell, Marlborough Drive RH15 0EU; Matthew Turnbull, Cranleigh; J Turner, Marston Ferry Road OX2 7EF; Keith Veewick, Tressillian Road SE4; Chris Webster, Chapel Street, Yorkshire; N J Wheeler, Ingham Drive, Sussex; P Whichello, Priests Lane CM15 8LE; G Wilson, Coton Road, Wolverhampton.

We've just about caught up with the April Competition winners — the **WALLY WEEK FAN CLUB COMPETITION** attracted a lot of interest with some pretty good entries so we've had to rope in David Western (ART) to help us in WORDS to judge the comp. Next issue for that one, and the **MICROMEGA SLIME CHALLENGE** and **AUTOMATA** — it's hard work checking the list of priorities against the official one, and the PiMan's on holiday at present so we weren't able to stitch him in to help. Bear with your loyal competition editor folks!

THE BIZ COMP WINNERS

1st **Nigel Richardson**, Thicket Road SM1 4PS
2nd **K W Lloyd**, Clwt Y Bont 3DU
3rd **K Grzesix**, Chesterfield Road, Derbyshire
4th **Mrs C Middleton**, Meersbreck Park Road S8
5th **Miss A Hooley**, St Dunstans W6
6th **Martin Bell**, Shore Road BT22 2RP

And then the forty four runners up:
Ian Bell, Raffles Road, Merseyside; N Best, Shurbbery Road BS16 5TA; Neil Chandler, Rhiwlas 7PW; Kevin Devine, Thornhill YO11 3LY; Timothy Duncan, Bawn Approach L12; D J Flisher, Brooksway TN29 9HG; Graham Fulcher, Lowenva IP25 7AX; Stephen A Graham, Green Lane CA2 7QB; David Griffiths, Bolton Road WN4 8TG; Mrs Hanmore, Queens Road PO36 8DT; Stephen Harris, The Avenue M33 4GA; Nicholas Holland, Sheffield Road S70 5UZ; Bill Ip, Norbury Close B98 8RP; R Judd, Croxdale Terrace NE10 0RR; Gary Lafferty, Finch Place PA5 0RL; P C Lodge, Upton Drive CH2 1BX; Norman McLaughlin, Carnlea Road BT43 6TS; James McMullen, Woodview, Ireland; Alistair May, Institution Road IV30 1QT; Philip Miggiton, Ironside Road S14; A Milligan, Fountain Road FK9 4AT; Mrs C Moose, Hollybank Close S12 2BN; Chris Moss, Godmans Lane CO6 1NE; Philip Nicholas, The Elms CV22 5EU; Michael Pierce, The Rectory SL3 7EN; Ian Percival, Amberley Road SK11 8LY; Clive Pilcher, Paddock Mead CM18 7RR; Graham Pugh, Ascot Close CF5 5BE; Paul Redington, Marton Grove SM4 5AJ; Mark Rose, Newberries Avenue WD7 7ED; S Rowe, Rosewalk BN12 4AW; Jon Sendel, Selly Oak Road S8 8DU; Trevor Shelley, Tees Street TS13 4LW; Sean Stephenson, Heugh Road NE66 3TJ; Larry Sutton, Sunning Dale Avenue 1JY; Steven Tait, Prospecthill Road G42; Stephen Temple, Kingswood Road WD2 6EF; Alan Thomas, Woodgate Road GL16 7QQ; David Thomas, Eskdale Avenue UB5 5DJ; David Tiffany, St Leonards Close SN16 9QB; Mark Watson, Point View NE20 9UZ; K B Wise, Brookside OX12 0JL; Aaron Wright SY9 5BN; Colin Young, Ironbridge Path CB7 5LJ

BUBBLE BUS WINNERS

Part One of the Bubble Bus Challenge:
First Five, winners of the Turbo Interfaces are as follows:
Adam Clover, Westgrove Avenue B90 4XN; **D N Atkins**, Monmouth Close DA16 2DX; **Norman McLaughlin**, Cornlea Road BT43 6TS; **Jonathan Braman**, Balneath Manor BN8 4AP; **Toby Willis**, StJohn's Close P28 7NU

Fifteen runners up will also receive their very own Bubble Bus T Shirt (but no interface) in due course:
Kevin Ternent, Broom Hill PL12 4DZ; S Bowman, Bablingley Cross PE31 6AP; Jon Shipper, The Bungalow NR20 4HD; Martin Jenkins, Walton Road KT8 0HZ; Miss B Parker, Barons Road, Suffolk; Mark Beevers, The Hylands SS5 4PP; Steven Betteridge, Crossways HR2 0TQ; Robert Smith, Main Road TA7 9LP; Philip Anderson, Hollins Crescent HG1 2JG; K B Wise, Brookside OX12 0JL; Marcus Cooper, Stourbridge Road B61 0AN; Mark Richards, River Close YO8 7JU; Grahame Chidwick, Welhome Road DN32 9LR; Darren Tyson, Boston Street HX6 1DP; Paul Russell, Duncombe Avenue G81 6PP

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

ROCKY HORROR WINNERS

Judging the entries for this comp. revealed that some of you didn't read the whole magazine before you entered! Lloyd gave the game away in Merely Mangram (Page 9 no less) when he wrote 'It isn't easy having a good time, says ace-villain Frank N'Furter . . . .' And this was the CORRECT answer to the tie-breaker.

Derrick Austin, Claf Close YO3 8NS was first out of the hat with an all-correct answer, so he picks up the album, video, shirt and game.

Shane Martin, Hibbert Road NG18 2LX came second and **Michael Pogmore** of 'Sydling' SO4 8LL came third.

The ten runners up were: David Griffiths, Bolton Road WN4 8TG; Alec Wood, Warrels Ave LS13 3NZ; Ian Woodside, Gobbins Road BT40 3TX; Michael Jones, Birmingham Road B72 1DO; P J Cousins, Kingsmill Road, Swindon; C J Hughes, Raeburn Road B55 8PS; Lee Joynson, Norway Street MG5 QE; Matthew King, Greencroft Gdns NW6 3LJ; Liam Symonds, St Matthew Street HU3 2UB; Christopher Silk, Glanville Drive B75 5HW;

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET WINNERS

FIRST — Winner of signed Album, sweatshirt and copy of the Argus Press Software game: **David Sobola**, Fishponds Road SW17 7LL



An unsigned album, sweatshirt and Spectrum game go to: **B S Bruce**, Forest Houses CA23 3AJ; **Darren Hall**, Yew Tree Close LU6 2ED; **F L Harland**, Matthews Lane M19 3ES; **Jason Witcher**, Maldenbury KT3 5QP; **S J Zsibrita**, Bowood Road 7LH

Runners Up (Game only) are:
Mark Allen, Coopersale Road E9 6AU; Andrew Austen, Harvest Bank HP6 5RD; A Barks, Judith Avenue IP17 1UY; Justin Bowen, Powers Court, Middlesex; Andrew Callaghan, Como Road SE23 2JW; A B Davis, Boudicca, Great Holland CO13 0JE; John V Denley, Kerby Avenue SP4 9SA; James Ellson, Pollards Wood Road RH8 0HY; David Greenwood, Fieldhead Avenue BL8 2LX; Phillip Jarmes, Wendley Drive; Mrs L Lane, Hanover Court, Bucks; Richard Lione, Upper Rainham Road RM12 4EZ; Paul MacGregor, Michael Toe ML6 8TQ; S G Mitchell, Munnings Close RG21 3EH; Malcolm Powell, High Road RM6 4HR; Mark Searle, Stock Hill TN16 3TJ; Paul Wadsworth, Lewis Court DA11 7EA; G R Warner, Shirley Road CB4 4JR; Aaron Wright, Shropshire SY9 5BN; C Yau, Delaney Street NW1 7RX

VOTING FOR THE ADVENTURE CHART

The CRASH Adventure Chart has picked up considerably since we first introduced it, with more and more votes coming in every day! To make life easier for sorting, we are now providing a separate write-in form, so please use it for the Adventure Chart, and not the one included at the bottom of the Hotline details. If you are voting on both charts, you may send both forms together in the same envelope of course.

How to register your votes

There seems to have been some confusion in the minds of voters for the Adventure Chart, so to clarify the situations, here's how we do it. You may vote for **as many titles as you wish** (not just five as in the Hotline Chart) and you may award any of them points out of ten. So, for instance, you might vote for seven titles giving each of them ten points if you think they are worth it, or only three and give them one each. These votes are then added up for each title and the total is divided by the number of people who voted for the program resulting in an aggregate figure. From these figures, the top thirty adventure games are taken in descending order.

Phoned-in votes are accepted over the Hotline **(0584 3015)** in the same way (please state that you are voting for the Adventure Chart at the beginning), and may also be written in letter form without the use of the coupon if you prefer.

Adventure Chart Prize Draw

And don't forget that, like the Hotline Chart, you can win prizes! Each month we draw a winner from the voters, who receives £40 worth of software and a CRASH T-shirt, with four runners-up each getting a T-shirt and a mini-subscription to CRASH for three months.

ADVENTURE CHART COUPON

Remember – points out of ten for as many titles as you wish.

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON
Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

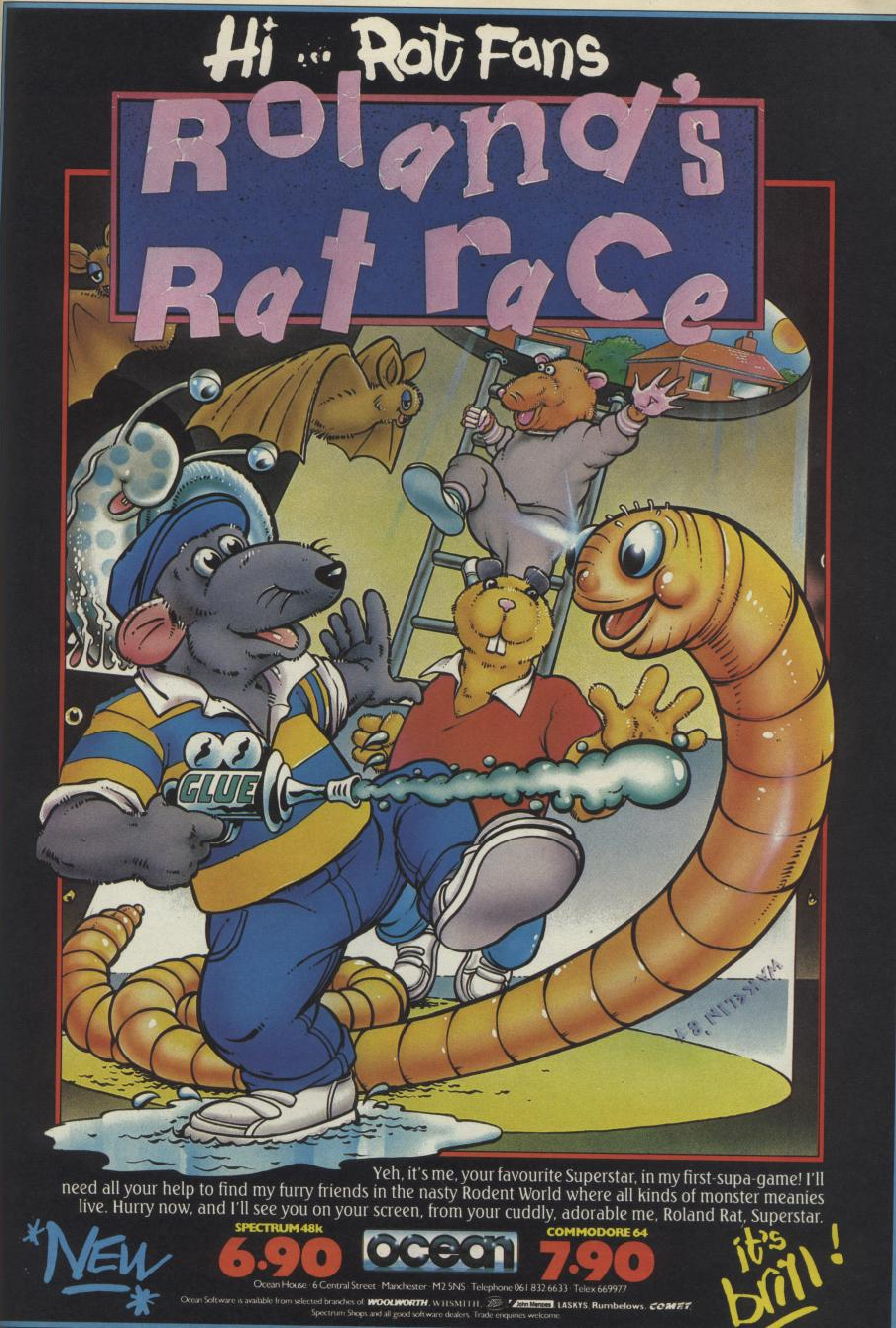
....

Postcode ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



Hi ... Rat Fans
Roland's Rat Race
GLUE
Yeh, it's me, your favourite Superstar, in my first-supa-game! I'll need all your help to find my furry friends in the nasty Rodent World where all kinds of monster meanies live. Hurry now, and I'll see you on your screen, from your cuddly, adorable me, Roland Rat, Superstar.
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Fit for the scrapheap?

But perhaps a touch of MICRO SURGERY is better than a kiss to make it better.

No matter how careful you are to avoid spilling cans of pop or cups of coffee over your Spectrum, no matter how religiously you switch the power off before connecting or disconnecting peripherals, it's always possible that your trusty computer will one day develop a headache and simply stop working.



Most computer shops have access to a firm of computer doctors, and you might consider taking your broken machine to your local shop. Bear in mind, though, that with the best will in the world the shop is only acting as your agent and might not have quite the level of interest that you have in getting your computer fixed and back in your hands as soon as possible.

If it's still under guarantee — which means you've been doing battle with orcs and zapping aliens for less than twelve months — then there's not too much of a problem. DON'T be tempted to open up the back and have a shufti yourself, but wrap your computer up nice and safe and send it back to Sinclair who will fix it for free.

On the other hand, if it's over twelve months old, the warranty on your Spectrum will have expired. There's no National Health Service for sick Spectrums and you're going to have to part with some hard-earned cash unless you've already insured your pride and joy against breakdown. While there's no reason why you shouldn't still send it back to Sinclair Research for repair, they'll want you to include a cheque for £30.00 with it and it could be at least a fortnight before you get it back.

There's no shortage of independent firms who can fix Spectrums — most of them offering a quicker turnaround and often charging much less than Sir Clive's in-house surgeons. If the withdrawal symptoms brought on by your dead Spectrum are really unbearable, one firm at least can usually effect any necessary repair over-the-counter in forty five minutes. Based in Manchester, **Mancomp** can offer what is arguably the fastest turnaround in the business to personal callers — but if you live in the Shetland Isles, it might be cheaper to buy a new Spectrum rather than make the round trip. You could always post it to them, though!

The most common fault to crop up on Spectrums involves a group of keys deciding to stop working. This is usually caused by the little membrane which connects the keyboard to the printed circuit board failing, and if you can persuade someone to sell you the replacement part (for around a fiver) it's an easy job to do yourself. As a rule, though, it's not too wise to go poking around inside your Spectrum even if the warranty has expired.

More than likely, you'll need to post your computer to your chosen doctor rather than deliver it by hand, and there are a few golden rules to bear in mind when you're about to send your beloved computer through the post:

Rule Number One has to be, pack it carefully — using the original box if you still have it. It's no use cramming it into a paper bag, sticking on a stamp and hoping the Post Office will handle your Spectrum with kid gloves.

Rule Two: always send the package Recorded Delivery — it only costs a few extra pennies, and it means that someone at the other end has to sign for your computer before the postie hands it over. It's not a bad idea to pay for an 'advice of delivery' while you are at the post office counter. This means that the postman sends you a card when he's got a signature from the people you've sent the package to. Keep the recorded delivery receipt and the acknowledgement card safe — just in case there are problems. Remember, your computer's worth at least 100 quid to you, and a few extra pennies spent on postal services can mean there are no arguments along the 'it must have been lost in the post' or 'it never arrived' lines.

Rule Three: always telephone in advance. Explain the fault and the symptoms, ask how much it's going to cost to fix and find out what sort of turnaround the firm can offer you. If a company usually offers a two-day turnaround, that's fine, but it just might be that they're snowed under with work when you send your machine to them, and they could be running late. Find out before you send your computer off, it's less painful than waiting for your postman to bring it back to you and having to phone and moan when it's not arrived when you expected it to.

Rule Four: always make sure you describe the fault as fully as you can in a note which you've included with the computer. If it's an odd fault, that only occurs with particular program, first check that it's not the program that's causing the grief by running it on a friend's Spectrum. If the program's OK, but your computer can't cope with it, send the cassette with your note.

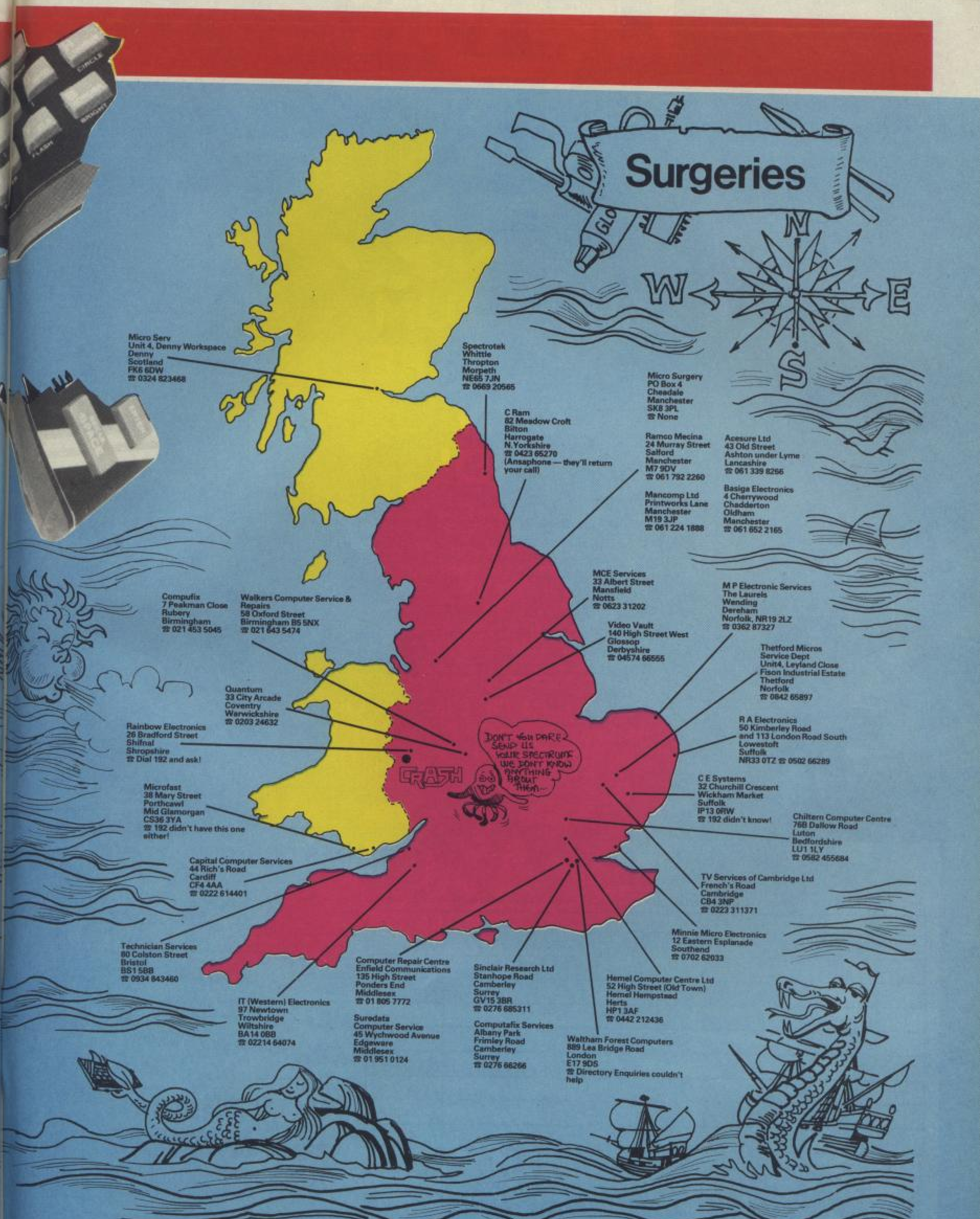
Rule Five: make sure you've found out how much the repairer's going to charge and remember to arrange to pay — either by including a cheque, paying on invoice or by Access/Barclaycard.

Rule Six: when choosing who to send your computer to for repair, ring round several firms to get a firm quote, an indication of the likely turnaround and details of any warranty offered on their work. Remember it might be worth spending an extra couple of pounds to send your repair job to a local firm. They might be that bit more expensive, but if there are any problems you can always go round and bang on their door fairly easily. Some companies charge more than others, and often will overhaul the whole computer for you rather than just repair a specified fault — a sort of 50,000 mile service. Generally, you get what you pay for.

So, in conclusion, check out the deals on offer, choose your Doctor, pack up your Spectrum carefully and send it by Recorded Delivery and you shouldn't have too many problems.

We've printed a list of some 30 Spectrum Doctors here — we've not checked them out as to relative cost of repairs, turnaround or reputation, but have no reason to believe any of them are less than honest, up-front organisations.

If we've left anyone off the list, or you've had a bad deal from a firm, please drop us a line addressed to **Spectrum Doctor, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** and we'll try to incorporate your comments in a future update.


Surgeries
N
W
E
S
Micro Serv
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Denny
Scotland
FK6 6DW
☎ 0324 823468
Spectrotek
Whittle
Thropton
Morpeth
NE65 7JN
☎ 0669 20565
C Ram
82 Meadow Croft
Bilton
Harrogate
N.Yorkshire
☎ 0423 65270
(Ansaphone — they'll return your call)
Micro Surgery
PO Box 4
Cheadale
Manchester
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☎ None
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24 Murray Street
Salford
Manchester
M7 9DV
☎ 061 792 2260
Acesure Ltd
43 Old Street
Ashton under Lyme
Lancashire
☎ 061 339 8256
Mancomp Ltd
Printworks Lane
Manchester
M19 3JP
☎ 061 224 1888
Basiga Electronics
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Chadderton
Oldham
Manchester
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Mansfield
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☎ 0623 31202
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Birmingham
☎ 021 453 5045
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Video Vault
140 High Street West
Glossop
Derbyshire
☎ 04574 66555
Thetford Micros
Service Dept
Unit4, Leyland Close
Fison Industrial Estate
Thetford
Norfolk
☎ 0842 65897
Quantum
33 City Arcade
Coventry
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R A Electronics
50 Kimberley Road
and 113 London Road South
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Suffolk
NR33 0TZ ☎ 0502 66289
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Shifnal
Shropshire
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DON'T YOU DARE SEND US YOUR SPECTRUMS WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEM...
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Microfast
38 Mary Street
Porthcawl
Mid Glamorgan
CS36 3YA
☎ 192 didn't have this one either!
C E Systems
32 Churchill Crescent
Wickham Market
Suffolk
IP13 0RW
☎ 192 didn't know!
Chiltern Computer Centre
76B Dallow Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 1LY
☎ 0582 455684
Capital Computer Services
44 Rich's Road
Cardiff
CF4 4AA
☎ 0222 614401
TV Services of Cambridge Ltd
French's Road
Cambridge
CB4 3NF
☎ 0223 311371
Minnie Micro Electronics
12 Eastern Esplanade
Southend
☎ 0702 62033
Technician Services
80 Colston Street
Bristol
BS1 5BB
☎ 0934 843460
Computer Repair Centre
Enfield Communications
135 High Street
Ponders End
Middlesex
☎ 01 805 7772
Sinclair Research Ltd
Stanhope Road
Camberley
Surrey
GV15 3BR
☎ 0276 685311
Hemel Computer Centre Ltd
52 High Street (Old Town)
Hemel Hempstead
Herts
HP1 3AF
☎ 0442 212436
IT (Western) Electronics
97 Newtown
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 0BB
☎ 02214 64074
Suredata
Computer Service
45 Wychwood Avenue
Edgeware
Middlesex
☎ 01 951 0124
Computafix Services
Albany Park
Frimley Road
Camberley
Surrey
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Waltham Forest Computers
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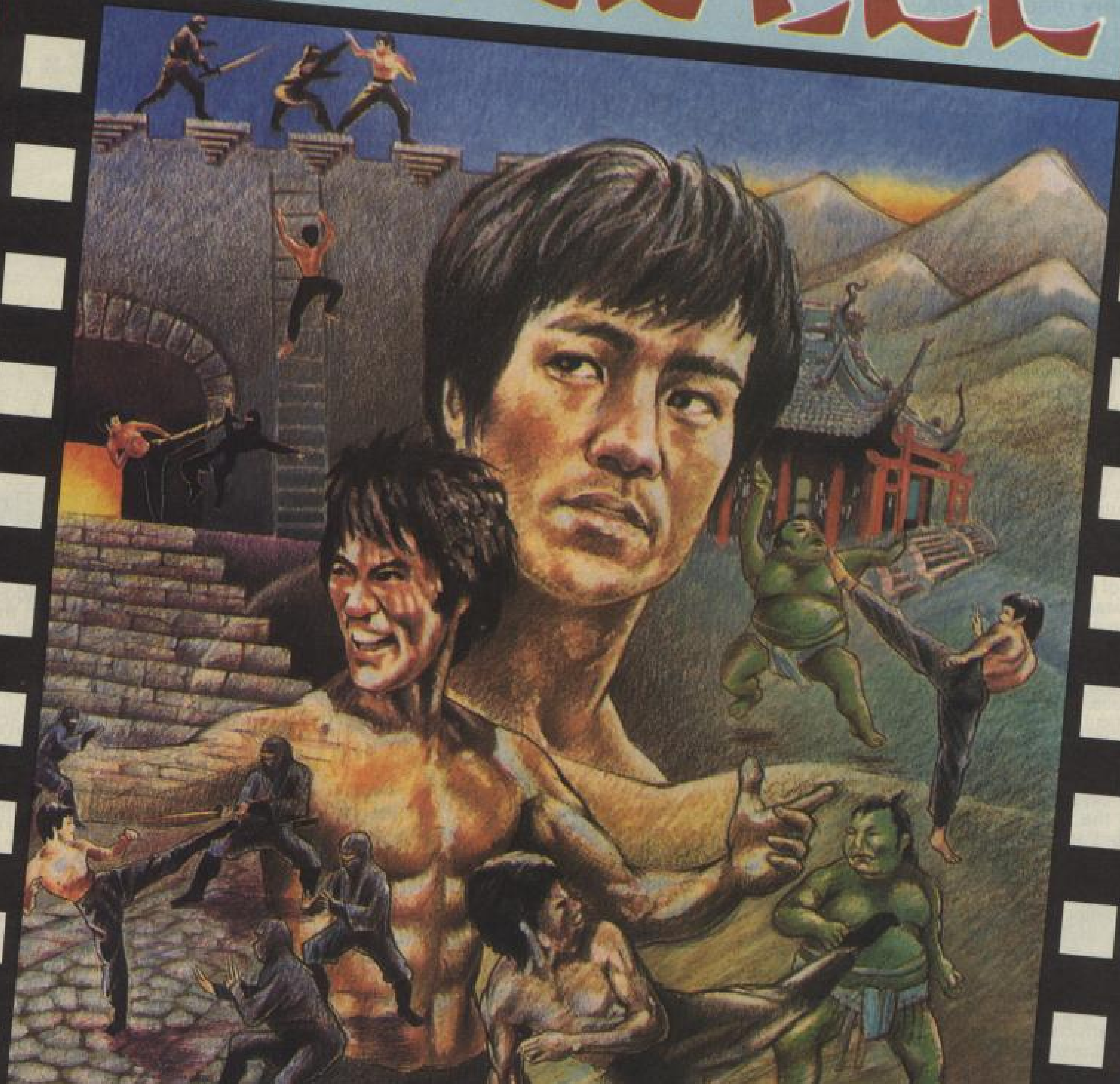
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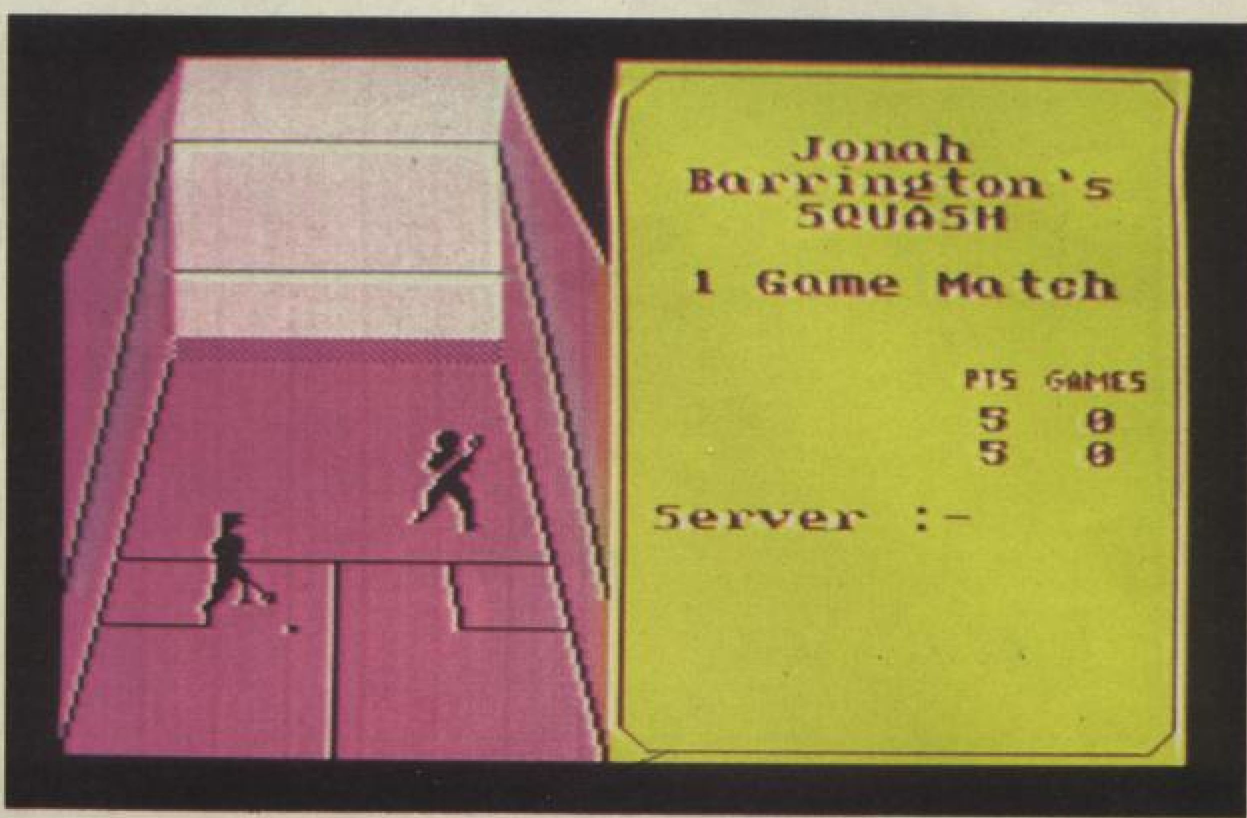
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JONAH BARRINGTON'S SQUASH

Producer: New Generation
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Malcolm Evans**



The game of squash is usually thought of as a wealthy young businessman's game, and has generally failed to capture the public eye as much as, say, tennis. There is also much argument as to which is the more skilfull. New Generation have joined forces with one of Britain's leading squash players, Jonah barrington, to develop this simulation, which closely follows the real thing, and may give you the opportunity to make up your own mind about squash.

The actual game is played between two in a closed court using the side and back walls to return the ball on the rebound. The rules of the game are well described on the game's inlay card, which points out where the simulation differs from the real thing of neccessity.

Squash can be played by one person against the computer, or by two players simultaneously using defined keys or twin joystick control if you have the right interface. There are four levels of difficulty, Red to Yellow, selected by the Spectrum colour keys. In play, the control is not unlike that of *Match Point*, directional keys moving your player, while the fire button makes a fore- or backhand stroke, whichever is appropriate to player and ball position at the time. The angle at which the ball leaves the racquet is determined by the length of time you keep fire depressed, and there are six possible angles. The other variable in play is the point at which your swing intercepts the ball, which affects its speed of travel.

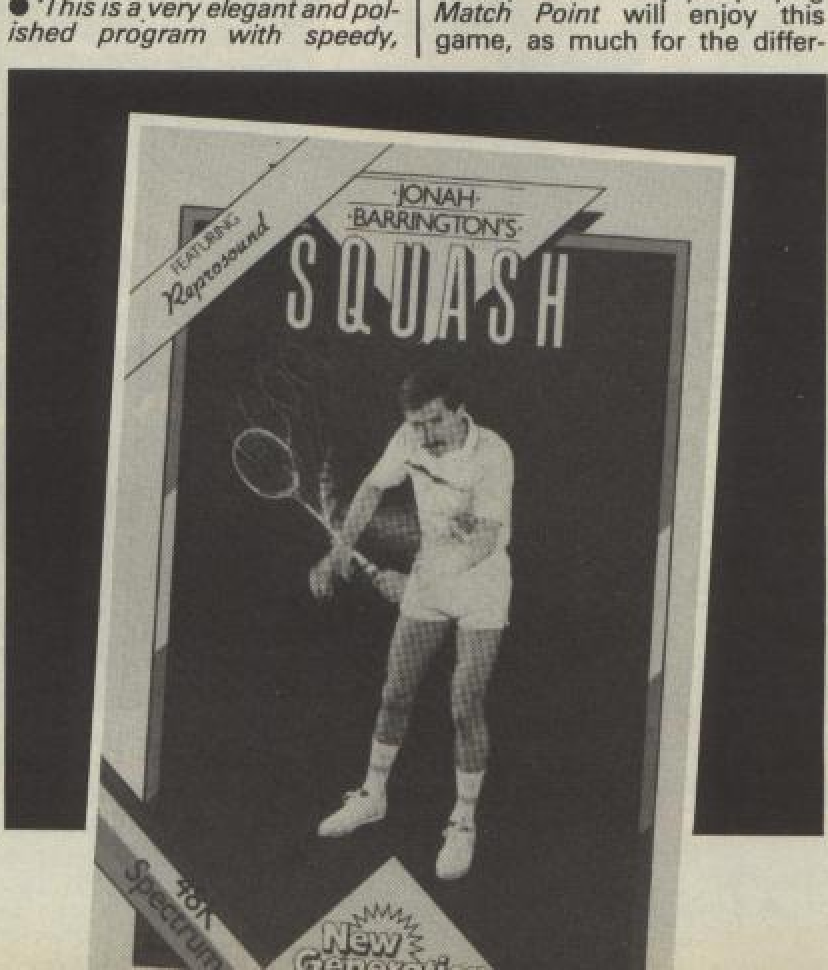
The screen display consists of two equal areas, the playing area depicting the 3D court on the left, and a status panel on the right with the score and service information. In addition to the visual scoring, Malcolm Evans has developed a way of reproducing Jonah Barrington's voice very accurately, and he can be heard calling out the scores.

CRITICISM

● *'Squash* is not unlike *Match Point*, two players and a ball with racquets, although being squash it's played indoors. The graphic representation of this game is extremely good and I love the way the ball bounces about with a sort of 'sodden' feel to it — quite realistic. Animation is good and, again, realistic — although on the forwards/backwards movement, do I detect some Trashman style walking?! The only real niggle I have about this game is that I found it very difficult to actually hit the ball. I'm sure it wasn't my fault, but that the racquet was a little too small! The voice reproduction is very good, although I found it difficult to hear it without my famdabidozy-super-blaster radio amplifier. (For assembly instructions on this super-Uffindell contraption please send £50 to ....) Of course you have to be interested in squash or tennis-type games in the first place to enjoy it to the full, but a good simulation anyhow.'

● *'This is a very elegant and polished program with speedy, clear graphics that simulate the real squash court very well. Given the obvious limitations of a small computer, New Gen have managed to convince me completely. One thing becomes clear immediately, however,* Jonah Barrington's Squash *isn't a game to get into in minutes, it takes a lot of practice to get familiar with the action of the ball and to get your swing into good shape. If you like sports simulations then this is a definite must for your collection, and a game I think you'll be playing for a long time to come.'*

● 'Anyone who enjoyed playing *Match Point* will enjoy this game, as much for the differences as for the similarities. The graphics are simple looking but work beautifully, and the effect of the bouncing ball with its shadow is excellent. The option of playing the computer or another person at the same time is very useful and gives the game an added addictive quality with both players trying to win and being unwilling to give up. This is hard to get into though, and a fair bit of skill needs to be developed before really satisfactory games can be played with any ease — well worth the effort though.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: user-definable for two players, four directions plus fire needed
Joystick: all popular makes
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: sober, mostly greys and black, but works well
Graphics: very good, fast and characterful, excellent bouncing ball
Sound: generally simple, ball noises and the amazing sound of Jonah Barrington's voice
Skill levels: 4
Special features: Reprosound
General rating: a difficult but absorbing simulation that should appeal heavily to sports game enthusiasts, but probably has a wider appeal as well.

Use of computer	86%
Graphics	84%
Playability	89%
Getting started	88%
Addictive qualities	85%
Value for money	82%
Overall	**87%**

911TS

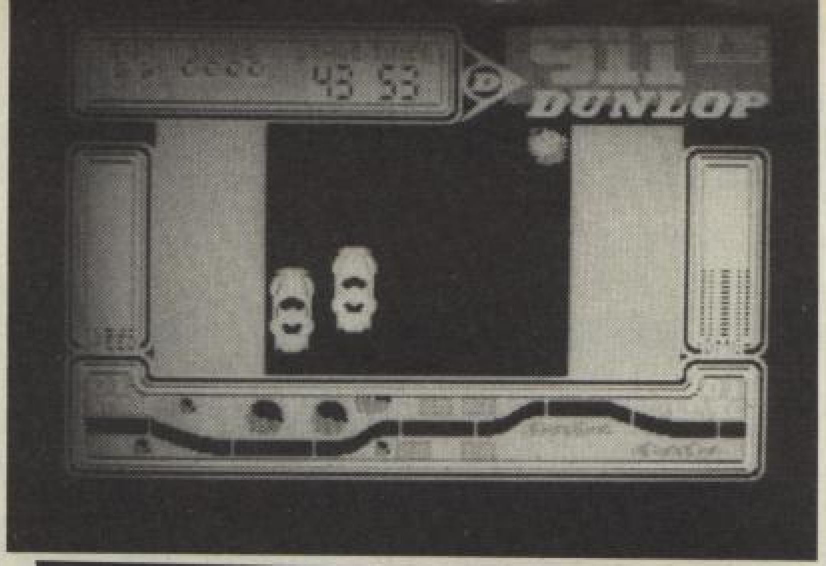
Producer: Elite
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author:

The inlay card states that *911TS* has been produced with the co-operation of the Dunlop Tyre Co. However from the information uncovered by the CRASH network of agents it seems that the game was put together for Dunlop to be used in their spring publicity drive. This may mean that the game might be a little difficult to find in the shops

In essence what we have here is a car racing game. You are an ace rally driver on a very tough course being relentlessly pursued by an unsporting foe. The opening stage of the game shows the player with £2000 to spend on goodies for the car. The add-ons are selected from four pages each with a choice of four items which range from tyres (price from £248 up to £644) to steering and suspension systems. You will have to budget carefully in order to buy the optimum range of accessories, the extras are not fitted to your car for the start but must be collected en-route.

The race takes place over 8 stages through four different types of scenery. The main playing screens presents a birds eye view of the road and a map of the course marking the positions of each of the 8 stages together with the position of your car and that of your foe. On the left an indicator shows your speed and opposite a similar indicator shows the amount of damage you car has sustained. At the top of the screen the distance to the end of the stage is shown together with the total score and the time remaining to complete the stage. Your car appears to stand still while the road scrolls downwards, and since only a small part of the road ahead is in view you have very little warning of the oncoming hazards.

At the end of stages 1,3,5, and 7 you are able to take advantage of pauses to collect some of the extra goodies which you may have ordered for without added features your car will not have the performance required to finish the race. Should you survive the race you can start again but each new start becomes more difficult as the time allowed to complete each stage shortens.



Rallying along on your Dunlops can be rather a slow process.

CRITICISM

● 'Graphically the game is not unlike *Grand National*, obviously the same sprite routines have been used, this is all very well if the game is good, playable and action packed but this game boasts none of these features. Avoiding bushes and the other objects scattered about the road isn't my idea of fun. Okay there is a certain degree of skill in avoiding the bushes etc. but it's not very entertaining. I think it's about time that Elite pulled their finger out and came up with something original that uses their usual high quality graphics but with a high standard of content.'

● *'911TS is fairly typical Elite game the style of the graphics and movement are givaways.* 911TS *is produced with the co-operation of Dunlop which means that the game uses the various Dunlop product names. While the game is fairly playable the act of dying on the first stage, or indeed any stage, means returning to the start, a severe knock for addictivity. Avoiding obstacles and so preventing damage to your car will require quick reactions and a great deal of concentration. Elite may have another commercial success because it's a commercial game, but to be honest, I don't think this is such a great improvement (except graphically) over oldies like* Turbo Driver *by Boss. It's also rather like* The Dukes of Hazzard *rotated through 90 degrees. Perhaps Elite should be known as the 'Wham' of computer games.'*

● 'I am sure that I would have enjoyed this game a lot more if I didn't have to return to the start every time my car was written off. This annoying feature occurs because you only have one life, to be fair though the damage to the car is reduced at the end of each stage but with the huge amount of debris on the course you will be lucky to make it that far. The opening stage of buying extra equipment for your car to improve performance could have been enhanced if prize money was given for completing the race. This would allow the player to buy more tackle and so improve the car further ready to face the rigours of the next stages which must be completed in a shorter time.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P accelerate/brake Z/X left/right **Joystick:** not stated but Kempston appears to work
Keyboard play: suitable layout and responds well
Use of colour: good choice but slight case of the attributes
Graphics: attractive with smooth scrolling action
Sound: none
Skill levels: 1 but game become progressively more difficult
Lives: 1 but damage reduced at the end of each stage
Screens: scrolling action
General rating: an attractive looking game which tends to be boring.

Use of computer:	70%
Graphics	75%
Playability	55%
Getting started	57%
Addictive qualities	54%
Value for money	55%
Overall	**58%**

C5 CLIVE

Producer: Scorpio Gamesworld
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Barry Jones**

These days everybody seems to be having a go at poor old Sir Clive and his dreaded C5, *C5 Clive* is the Scorpio contribution. The game puts you in the driving seat — well the only seat in fact. The object of the game is to get your newly acquired C5, just purchased from a rather slick salesman, from the garage to your home.

The game comes in two parts. After picking up your new Sinclair easy rider you must get home. You and your machine are shown traversing across the screens from left to right but in your path there are obstacles like ghosts, cats, walls, trees and runaway prams. The player controls his C5 by moving it up and down the screen, it can be made to go faster but it will always be moving forward. The first stage of the game requires the player to pick up batteries from each of the screens. Doing so and avoiding the obstacles will get you onto the next screen, and so on until the end of the first stage.

The second stage involves



driving through the city streets in rush hour. For this stage your route is dictated by the street layout and you can exit from any part of the screen if an exit exists. The second stage is harder by virtue of the extra traffic. How far you have to travel depends on the skill level selected at the start of the game. If you purport to be an advanced C5 driver your will find the second stage journey is over 60 screens — equivalent to 60 miles.



CRITICISM

● 'I suppose that it's obvious that somebody would eventually take the funny side of the Sinclair C5 and build a game around it. I don't recall from any of the C5 blurb that it was able to fly, as this game portrays, but then again this is a special turbo boosted job with Carlos Fandango wheels. The instructions for this game are well presented in a humourous fashion. The scenery that you guide Sir Clive through is a little far fetched, after all you don't usually have hundreds of brick walls looming up on you together with ghosts, prams and animated hoovers, nevertheless I suppose that Sir Clive does live in a land of his own. Graphically the game is quite pleasing although I was a bit disappointed with the way the C5 moved, it scrolls across the screen smoothly but when you move up or down it moves in blocks. The game doesn't seem to have much content and I soon got bored. Not very inspiring, in fact I would go so far as to say don't put this on your buying list, although at £1.99 it may be worth considering if you are after cheap software.

● *'I think for the asking price this game is well worth having, though I must admit I did find the graphics very annoying. For the first stage of the game the objects that had to be driven around looked as if they could be 3D representations, specifically it looked as if one could drive behind the trees and walls. I can understand crashing into a tree trunk or the base of a wall but how is it that I can crash into the foliage at the top? Perhaps we are being spoilt by all of these super realistic graphics that keep appearing on the Spectrum. On the whole when one has overcome the mental block with the graphics this is a fun game to play, with so many screens it will need some pedal power to complete*

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down Space jump
Joystick: programmable only
Keyboard play: responds well
Use of colour: not exciting
Graphics: very simple and a bit misleading
Sound: liberally spread about but you may wish it wasn't
Skill levels: 6
Lives: 3
Screens: several
General rating: cheap and cheerful.

Use of computer:	60%
Graphics	55%
Playability	50%
Getting started	60%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	65%
Overall	**65%**

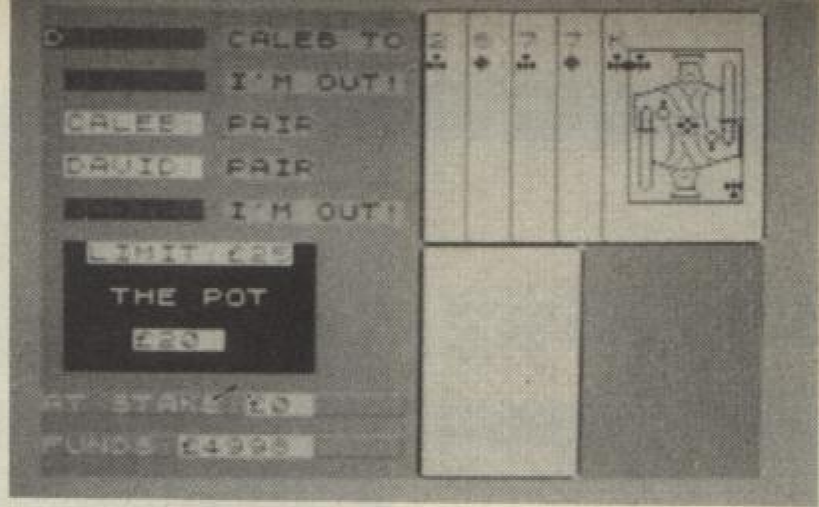
HOW THE RATINGS WORK

IMPORTANT CHANGE!!!

After more than a year of maintaining the CRASH rating system, we have made one important alteration. The **OVERALL** rating is **no longer calculated as a strict average of the previous 6 ratings.** Now each reviewer is independently allowed to judge the Overall worth of a game as a **separate rating**. We hope this will help overcome some of the inconsistencies which readers have noted in the past.

OVERALL PERCENTAGE is now a separate and distinct rating. ALL ratings are an average of three reviewers' opinions.

Under 30% — a waste of time
31-40% — generally poor but may appeal to some
41-50% — below average to average
51-55% — reasonable average if game type enjoyed
56-60% — above average to good
61-70% — good on most counts, generally recommended
71-80% — very good, recommended
81-89% — excellent
Above 90% — a CRASH Smash, words fail....



A pair of sevens with King high — not the most illustrious betting hand.

MAVERICK

Producer: CCS
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Review: **by John Minson**

'Poker is not a card game but a gambling game played with cards.' (David Parlett TEACH YOURSELF POKER AND BRAG 1980)

There were six of us at the table; Adam, Ben, Caleb, David, with eyes like a moose, Eddie and myself. I was holding two pairs, fours and tens with an ace, but Ben was betting like money was going out of fashion and I was nervous.

While previous attempts have included the likes of 'sexy Mindy' stripping away her pixels (see April '85 issue), *Maverick* is the first serious poker program for the Spectrum — and what can be more serious than playing for money? Not that it's a difficult game to play — just get a higher scoring hand than your opponents — but playing well is difficult, depending on a combination of psychology and statistics to judge how high you can bet. Learning can prove a costly affair!

The application of characterisation techniques, so popular in adventure games at the moment, to your five opponents in *Maverick* is a genuine breakthrough. Is Caleb betting like that because he's got a Royal Flush or is he just bluffing? CCS also claim that the program responds to your tactics. This human level extends to allowing you to cheat by trying to peek at the cards of an opponent who's won without having to reveal them because everyone else has dropped out.

The display is unspectacular but serviceable, with your cards displayed in full and a line for comments by the other players. It's easy to get drawn into the 'school' despite there being no danger to your wallet — though that will be a real advantage as far as many people are concerned.

The one real problem is that only a five card draw is catered for. Poker is really a number of variations on one of them; in the draw you can change cards between the two rounds of betting. Most expert players favour stud poker though, and that's a very different game. The answer is for CCS to provide a stud program as good as this one.

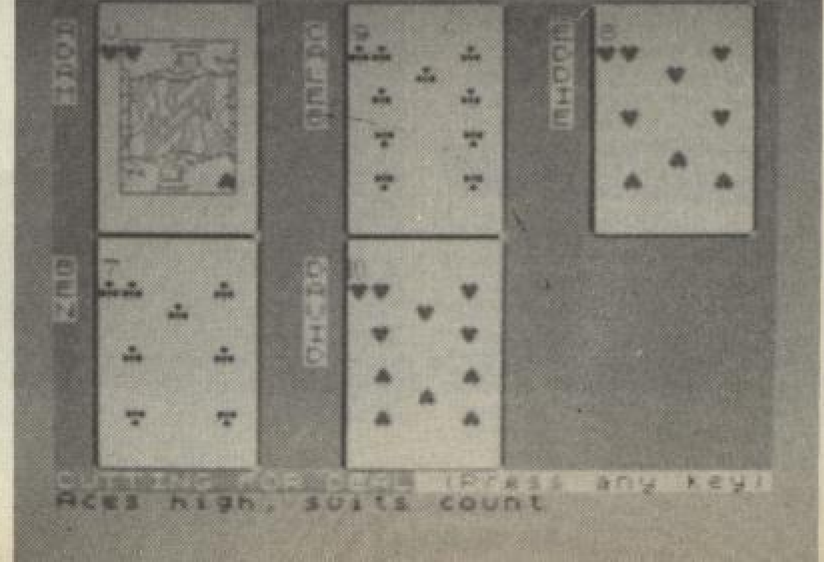
I also found my opponents rather too timid and the difficulty level misjudged. Even on the hardest level, with £500 and unlimited raising of stakes, it's hard to go bankrupt, and though you wouldn't want to in real life that danger could broaden the appeal of *Maverick*.

While it isn't for complete novices, as the inlay card doesn't include full rules, it could prove an efficient and economical way to learn something about the game, even if it's only that in poker it's at least as easy to lose as it is to win.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Y(es)/N(o) plus numerics for bets
Graphics: cards displayed for you and others at showdowns
Sound: good beeps and effects
Skill levels: 3 depending on funds available
Lives: 1 of course
General rating: a good draw poker program that can prove quite addictive.

If they were all held in one hand, someone would have a decent straight.

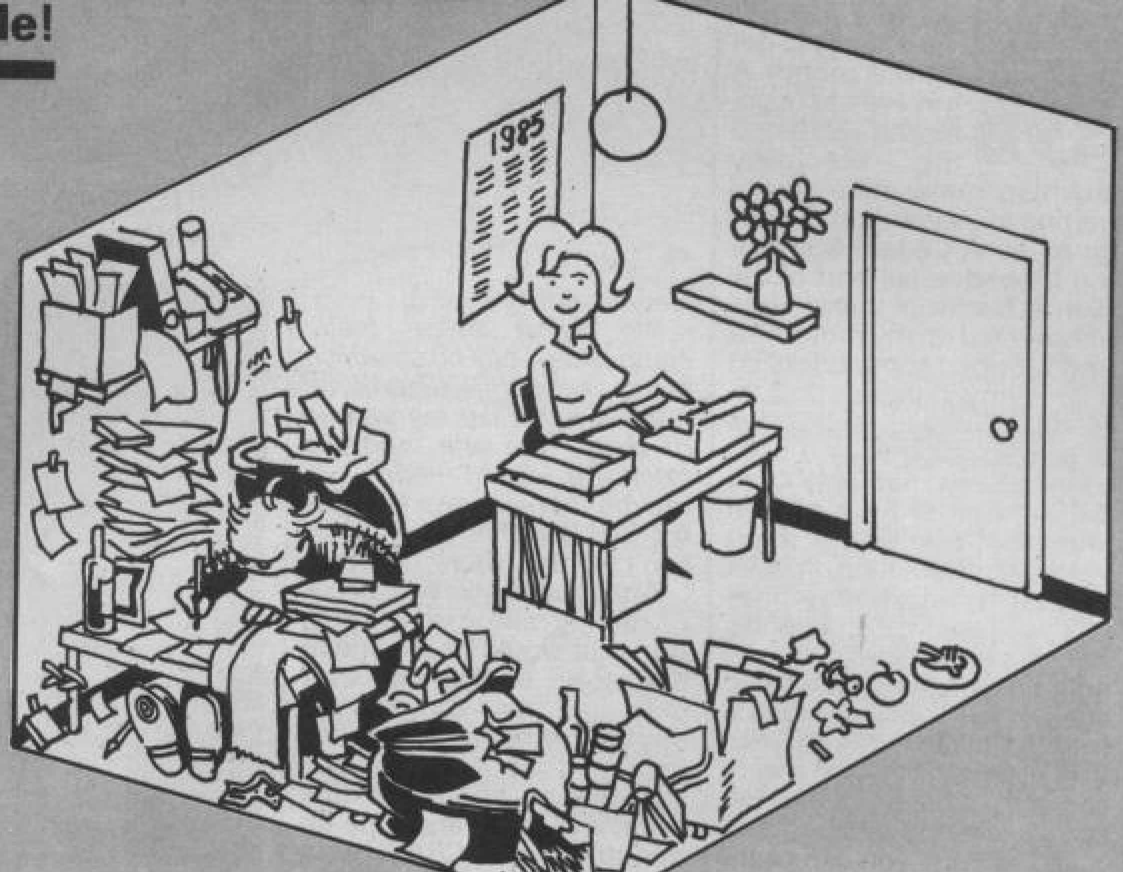


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How can this be, I hear you cry? Simple. She's a black belt in Office Efficiency and part of her expertise was gained through using **Mini Office**, a program sold by Database for £5.95.

On a recent visit to the land of the overflowing waste paper bin usually inhabited by the likes of Mangy Mangram and old Dash Ed, Jeanette was appalled by the apparent disarray and disorganisation she saw before her eyes in CRASH Towers.

Little did she know that we can find any given piece of paper in our office in three seconds flat: *'. . . ah yes, the in depth interview with MegaHype software . . . that's third empty fag packet along behind the brown storage radiator'*. Works every time.

Nevertheless, dear sweet Jeanette felt moved to offer a hundred copies of **Mini Office** as prizes for our readers so that some of you could avoid ending up as disorganised beings who don't know one end of a spreadsheet from a word processor.

Pausing only to tidy up the horrendous mess on Lloyd's desk and pose for a portrait, Jeanette modelled for a picture drawn by our very own Oli. Trouble is a bottle of correction fluid spilt on the original and now we have two slightly different versions.

To win your very own copy of **Mini Office** all you have to do is spot all the differences in the second picture, ring them in pen, complete the entry form and rush it to the **MINI OFFICE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to reach us by **July 27th**. First hundred correct entrants will be sent on their way to office efficiency with a complimentary copy of **Mini Office** (reviewed fully by Franco 'Mr Efficiency' Frey in the February Issue). He's never been quite the same since.

Name ....

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FRNT

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT AT THE FRONT

ANGUS RYALL

YOU ARE LUCKY, my friends, to get me this month. A few weeks ago, having suffered the absolutely crushing humiliation of not getting any awards at a lunch given by A Certain Competing Magazine (all part of the plan to bankrupt them), I had another axi on my motorbike **and** dropped some bricks on a foot (my fiancée's fortunately). These disastrous events, coming hot on each other's heels, had only been partly balmed by a certain journalist wanting to interview ME (I couldn't believe it! Real fame! I had to pose beside Ian Livingstone's Porsche for pictures!), when I happened across a diatribe against my moral standards from another writer on THIS VERY MAGAZINE! I mean, come on chaps, let's show some solidarity here.

At any rate, you can probably imagine that by this time the slings and arrows etc, had got a bit much, so I decided to emigrate. To Greece.

Unfortunately, not being able to afford to get the natives slapping the old breeze blocks together to make the traditional colonial villa, we were forced to stay in an hotel which was, er, owned by a friend of ours — I hate to admit it, but I do know the odd capitalist, and even one or two outright tyrants (my mum) — and was full of Scandinavian sand beetles. I must say at this point, though, that if you're ever in Rhodes, the Regina Hotel is a wonderful place to stay (you wouldn't deny me my kickbacks, would you?) and the booze is **a)**cheap (especially ouzo) and **b)** incredibly strong (ouzo again). One could develop quite a taste for the stuff!

I did notice, though, that the home computer market is not very well developed in Greece, in fact it's non-existent, and that youth culture seems to thrive on motorbikes and scooters. *(Is this the same Greece that John Minson visited — see News Input — ?—Ed)*

We hired three really clapped out old bikes which were, like HORRIFIC, and my fiancee burnt her leg on one of them (the one with the brick no doubt —Ed) ... maybe there is a market here for Sinclair after all (well he can't sell them here, can he)?

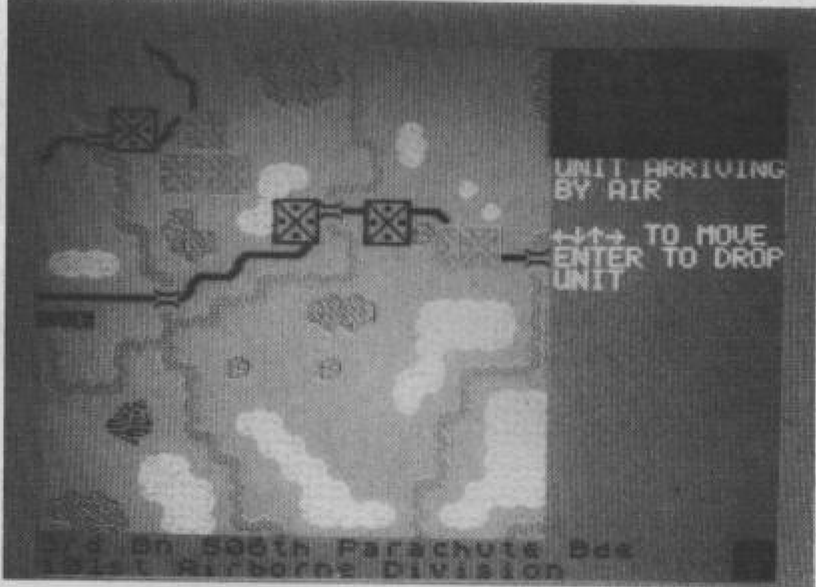
After two weeks we ran out of money and came home. And that would be the end of the story, except that as I only had two games this month, I thought I'd leave it until next month, so I ended up with only about 18 hours to review, write and type up the stuff when CRASH told me they needed it this month. Still, at least I know they missed me. And the two games are very good.

A CRASH Smash

ARNHEM

Producer: CCS
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Author: **RT Smith**

Oh no! I thought, when I got this one out of its jiffy bag. Can it possibly be true? Perhaps the lavish praise I've been heaping on CCS of late has gone to their heads! Maybe they have taken on a new marketing manager (horror of horrors) to actually start getting their stuff into shops and weird things like that. The reason I'm wondering about all this is because *Arnhem*, the latest from CCS, comes in a big box — in fact the same size vinyl pack as *Alien* by Argus (here's a possibility for you, boys) with a full-colour painted cover and a sixteen-page booklet with a fold-out map of the playing area.



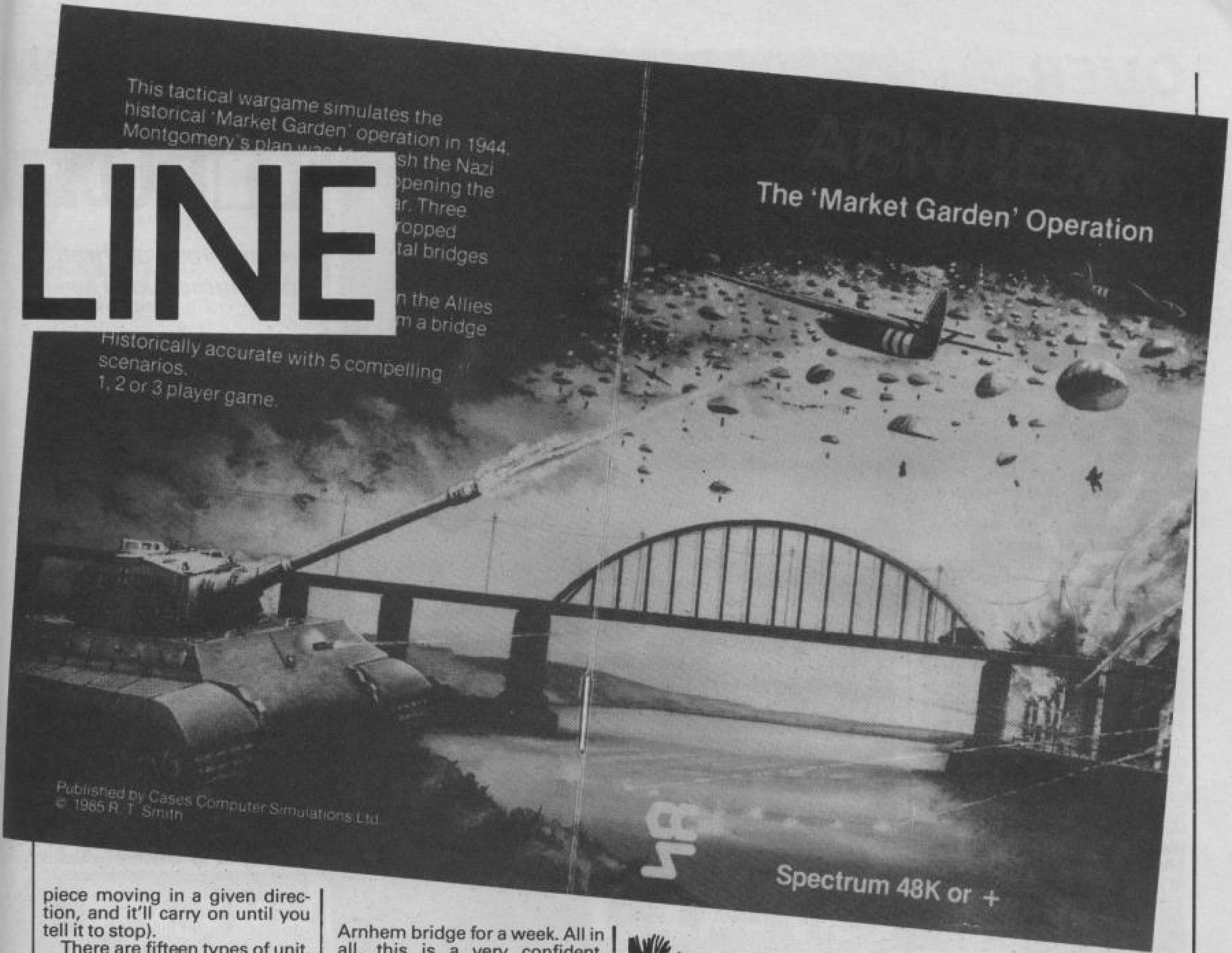
The cover picture is a little bit dodgy, but the overall effect of the packaging is very impressive. No more inlay cards that fold out eighteen times! No more miniscule print! Eee, luxury.

The program is pretty good, too. You know how I was always moaning about coordinate-controlled movement? Well, they've finally got rid of it, and bought in cursor control. The game is very slick, as strategy games go; for example, as you finish doing what you want with one unit, you are moved on immediately to the next eligible unit. You don't actually have to do anything with the unit — if you don't want to, there's a 'pass' feature — but it's a nice touch, not having to do all the donkey work in between moves.

There are five scenarios, increasing in difficulty and length (in playing turns) from seven turns (which takes about an hour) to 26 turns (which apparently takes eight to ten hours)! The scenarios progress through the physical playing area, which is a long thin strip, roughly 30 x 100 units, with the first (easiest) being the approach to Eindhoven, the fourth being the assault on Nijonegen and Arnhem, and the fifth being all four previous scenarios rolled into one. The object of each scenario is quite specific; in the first you have to clear the main road to Eindhoven of Huns, and if you don't succeed in doing this you lose, even if you've wiped out the vast majority of the Krauts in trying. The other objectives tend to be fairly similar, capturing bridges and so on.

When you start playing the game you are presented with a fairly large (20 x 20) map window, an identification of which unit is to go, and a menu of options for that unit. The units are represented on the map as squares with symbols in them. Each unit initially covers an area 2 x 2, but it can be put into a component mode, which gives faster travelling, but makes the unit more vulnerable to attack. 'Compacted' units cover only one map square. The map graphics are remarkably clear and effective, and although there is no specific command to search the whole map area, it is possible to survey quite a bit of it by using the 'travel' command (a sort of automatic movement order — you can use it to set a

LINE



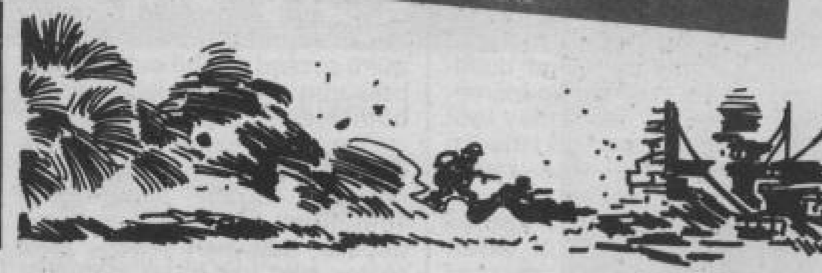
piece moving in a given direction, and it'll carry on until you tell it to stop).

There are fifteen types of unit, ranging from tanks to gliders; depending on the type of unit, the menu of options available will change slightly — eg, artillery units can 'bombard' over a certain range, while all other units can only attack when adjacent to an enemy unit. Units can also 'dig in' which gives them a virtually impregnable defence position — a favourite trick of the Huns is to dig in on one side of a bridge, so you can't get across.

It is clear that a lot of thought has gone into programming the computer intelligence here, since I've not been able to even get to Eindhoven yet — perhaps it's just lack of thought gone into programming my intelligence! There are quite a few different terrain types, and the map presentation is very pleasing — especially the 'black and white' mode, which is handy because it means I can play it in bed (well, Radio Rentals finally sent the bailiffs round for the colour telly).

The game has a save facility, which is obviously vital if it takes eight hours to play — I mean, can you imagine it? It must be like reading the entire Mills & Boon library in one fell swoop! Not being a gentleman of leisure (like Mr Brewster) I haven't had the time to get into the long game, but a friend of mine who has says it isn't worth it — he got snuffed at about seven and three quarter hours, after holding Arnhem bridge for a week. All in all, this is a very confident, competent and realistic historic simulation from CCS — Monty would be proud of them.

Overall verdict: CCS pass the Bailey bridge stage at last. Best World War II game this year.





OVER-LORDS

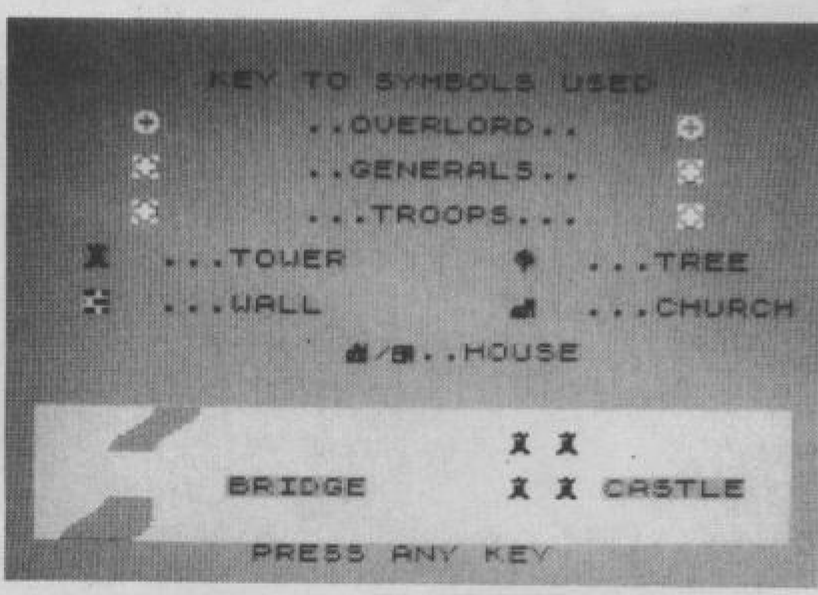
Producer: Lothlorien
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Author: **John Pragnell**

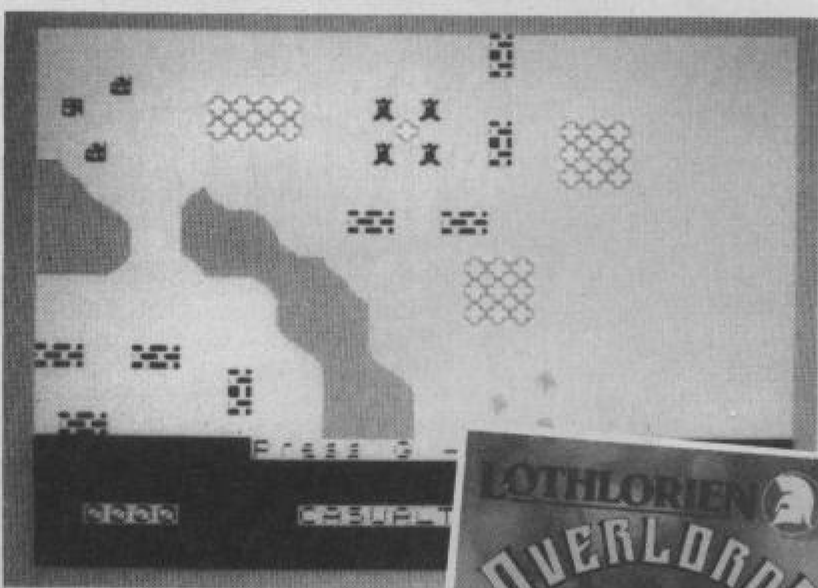
It's often interesting to look back on great ideas that failed and try to see why they didn't catch on. This game is radically different from anything of Lothlorien's I've seen before, and it is fairly radical by anybody's standards. It's a two player, simultaneous action wargame. There are very few simultaneous two player games available, but it's something that's always struck me as being a good idea; so much so, in fact, that last year I was heavily involved in producing one myself. At that time, however, after extensive playtesting and research, we arrived at the regretable conclusion that the computer game player is essentially a solitary beast, and so we were forced to include a one player option in the game (which was not nearly so much fun to play). Lothlorien have stuck to their guns, though, and kept *Overlords* as purely as two player game, which will probably destroy its chances of success.

The game is mechanically very simple, and the speed of play is very fast; because both players are moving their pieces at once, the game attains a fluidity and pace hitherto unknown in computer wargames, and which more than compensates for lack of terrain features — in fact I found the few trees and buildings that are on the map incredibly irritating, because they kept slowing up my forces as I tried to reinforce my front lines — rather like real life, I suppose.

The map area comprises twelve screens, each of which contains a castle. Each army has three types of unit; troops, generals and a king. The object is to kill the opponent's king, or occupy a certain number of castles (which range from 7 to 12 depending on what difficulty level you choose).

The players start with their armies at different ends of the map, and gradually close in on each other. Movement is cursor-controlled (hooray!); the cursor keys are user definable, and one or two joysticks can be used (depending on your interface). Movement is smooth and fast, you just place the cursor over the unit you wish to move, and hold down the 'carry' key to move the unit with the cursor. The way the game scans is by continually rotating through different screens, one by one. Both players have around thirty seconds in each sector to move their pieces, so although movement per piece is unlimited within each sector you tend only to be able to move one or two pieces a long way, or loads of pieces a short distance. The borders of each sector overlap, so pieces moved to the edge of







one sector can be picked up in the next. Combat occurs when pieces are adjacent to each other, and is decided by numerical superiority — I haven't quite sussed this bit out yet, but I presume that the pieces attack both laterally and diagonally.

One soon leams the benefits of forming into 'squares', and utilising terrain features to strengthen defences. The game pauses between each map sector, and has to be manually restarted; this is a very handy feature, because it enables both players to sit back for a contemplative breather before plunging into another intensive thirty second round.

So far, so good. This simultaneity really does add a new dimension to wargames. the problems of course start in the practicalities of actually playing the game. As my company discovered when we tried to do this last year, two people sitting at one Spectrum means that you have to be very good friends. Apart from the obvious difficulties of operating in someone else's armpit, it can be difficult to stop falling off the chair. Naturally, Lothlorien have thought of this, and have made the game playable with joysticks, so long as you have the twin-port hardware. They have also made it playable over network, with two Spectrums linked by Interface 1s. Golly Gosh! I mean this is really revolutionary stuff but... I can't go along with games that require whole kaboodles of extra hardware in order to make them properly playable.

Having said that, if you have an Interface 1, and know someone else who has (very unlikely this, since only 100,000 Interface 1s have been sold) then this game will be a boon! Oh, don't forget the second television set ...I get the feeling that this network facility may be toyed with by fallow software houses up and down the country, but probably not by anyone else. It's a shame really to end up criticising such an innovatory game precisely for its innovations, so I'll end up by being nice: If you have an Interface 1, you should buy this. If you have a friend (go on, I bet you have) then I would recommend you try it — it's very hard, very intensive, and knocks spots off all other two player wargames. I don't yet know if Lothlorien are seeing the results of their deal with Argus (in terms of cash), but if this is a pointer to the future from them, it's most welcome.

Overall verdict: a bit bizarre, but maybe Lothlorien's best yet.

□TECH□NIC

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A Quick look at three Communications Books....

The most comprehensive general introduction to getting your computer communicating with the outside world has to be Ray Hammond's On-Line Handbook, **published by Fontana at £4.95.**

Mr Hammond starts off by outlining the benefits of linking your computer up with the outside world and then goes on to explain how to go about achieving the link up. As a guide to selecting your communications software and modem and connecting up to the phone line, his book provides an excellent starting point for the communications novice. It will also act as a handy reference guide to the services available once you're linked up and ready to go.

The book is not machine-specific and the first section gives an excellent overview of communications hardware and software, and sets out to explain how communication with other computers is effected without burying the reader in unintelligible technical jargon. In this aim it should succeed with even the most computer illiterate person, and have him or her well on the way to getting on-line.

The remainder of the book is effectively a comprehensive directory of the bulletin boards and on-line databases available in the UK and overseas and it contains a wealth of valuable information that even the most experienced modem user should want to keep on hand.

The Hacker's Handbook written by Geof Wheelwright and Ian Scales and published by Longman is a machine specific guide to getting on-line. Available for the Spectrum, Commodore 64 or BBC user, this particular Hacker's Handbook shares its title with a slightly more exciting publication (not to be confused these two).

Although one shouldn't judge a book by the number of pages it contains, this handbook is less than half as thick as Ray Hammond's contribution to the pool of communications knowledge and does smack rather of the quick cash-in book. For the Spectrum user, it offers more specific advice than the On-Line Handbook and as such it would be useful to the total novice.

The authors do provide a sound overview of the equipment and services available, and are honest in their opinions. Their book is an undemanding, short and sweet introduction to the world of communications.

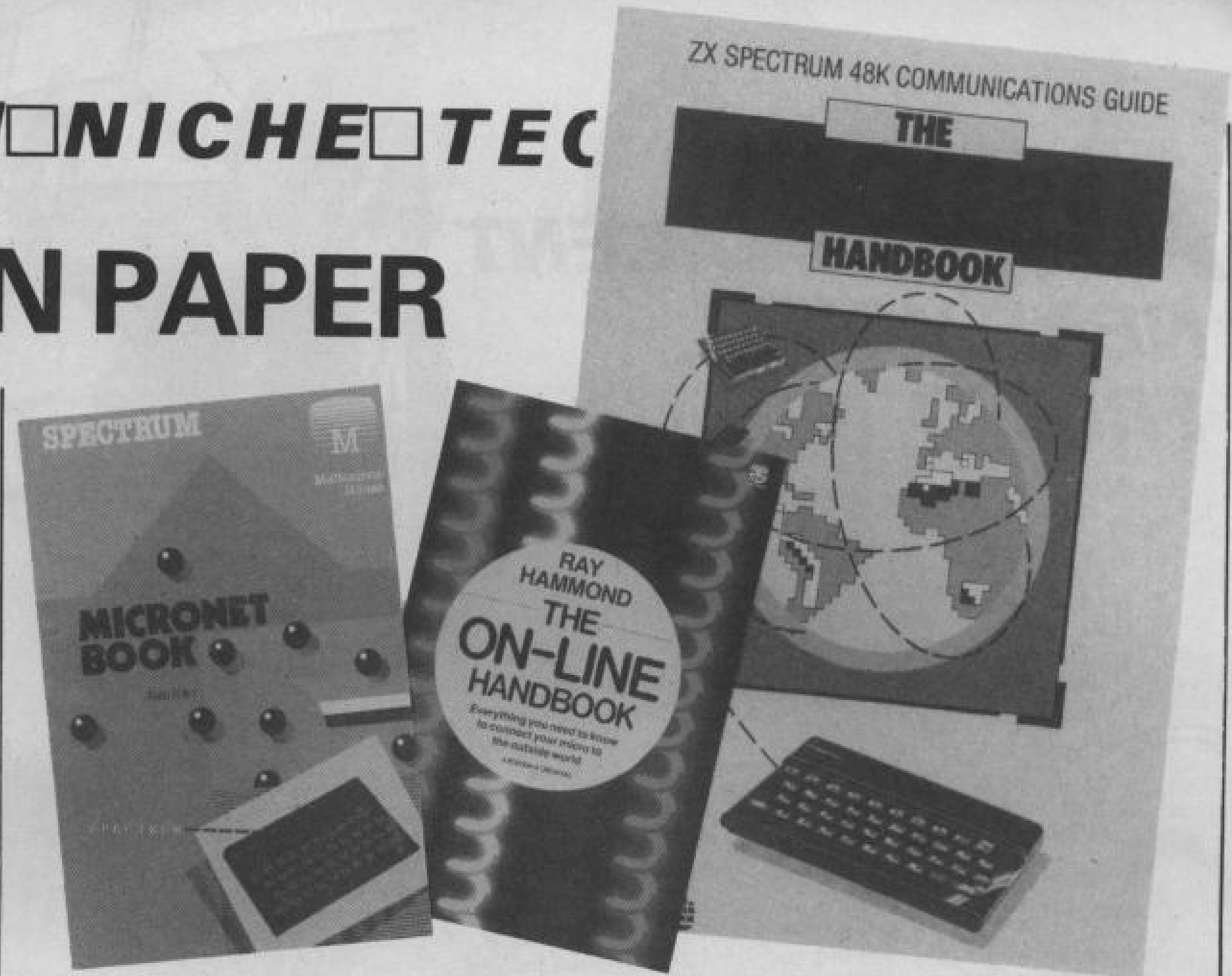
Overall, however, Messrs

T ING IT ON PAPER

Wheelwright and Scales have produced a very thin book, which has been bulked out by lots and lots of pretty graphics and screenshots which do little to augment the information contained in the text. Quite why a book which is called 'The Hackers Handbook' should dismiss the subject in less than a page, and take a very 'grown up' perspective in so doing is beyond me. Oh well . . . .

Alan Giles' **Spectrum Micronet Book**, published by Melbourne House for £6.95 has to be the definitive work on the VTX500 modem and Prestel. It is more of a technical manual than a readable introduction to on-line communications with a Spectrum, however.

It's an odd sort of book — annoyingly all the zeros have a slash through them, just like someone thought a proper computer book *should* have. And it has to win the 'Gumbo Fatgut Daftest Proofreading Error of the Decade' award for the boo-boo that crops up on page 6.



Page 6 contains four diagrams, and across the top of the page a message to the book printer's art department appears: 'ART DELETE THE WORDS (side view) IN TOP HEADING'. Art read this message, deleted the words 'side view', which duly didn't appear in the top heading, and then left the message asking for the deletion on the page. Tee Hee — how silly!

Despite its title, The Micronet Book isn't really all about Micronet, and if you bought it under the impression it would explain from scratch what Micronet *is* all about you might be a little disappointed. As the definitive guide to the possibilities of the VTX5000 modem, however, it can't be beaten in terms of technical content. Not really for beginners, but ideal for anyone who wants to get into their VTX5000, understand it and its relationship with Prestel fully, and alter the way it ticks.

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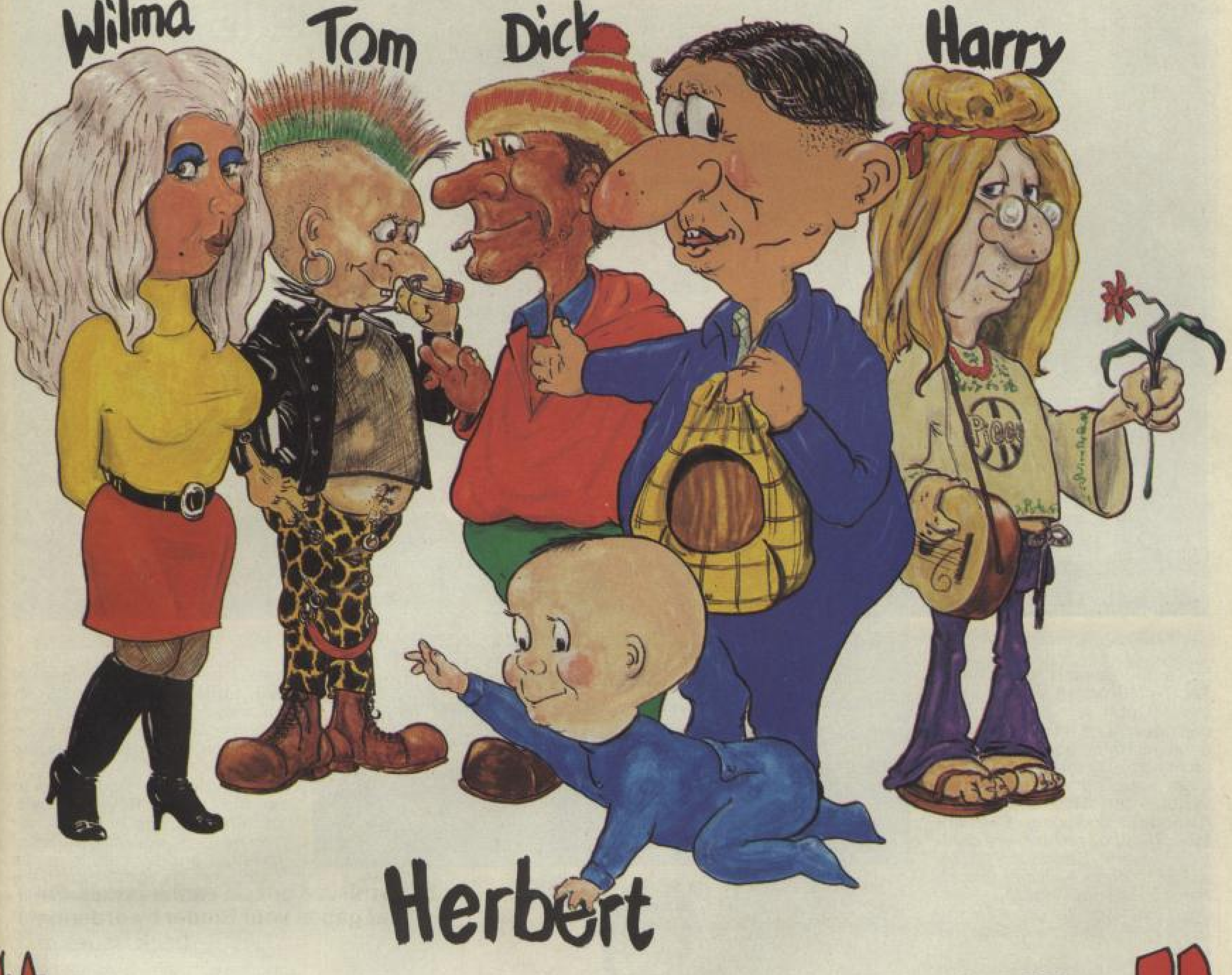
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ON THE COVER



For a change, our artist this month doesn't work with brush and canvas and isn't involved with cassette inlays or posters. *DAVID THORPE* *hasn't worked for the old IMAGINE either, and has been paid for every piece of work he's done! He's the man behind OCEAN and US GOLD's loading screens, amongst other things . . . .*

For around twenty years **David Thorpe** followed his career as an architectural technician. In the early seventies he started doing detailed, fine art drawings of architecturally interesting buildings. Soon he was illustrating features for Whitehorn Press's magazines including **Cheshire Life**. *'They're seen in every dentist's surgery'*, David said, *'I'd be asked to go to a village and do half a dozen drawings of interesting buildings to go with the feature — you know the type of thing'*.

Then ICI's pharmaceutical division commissioned a limited edition print from David which they used as their Christmas card. This became a regular annual order, and David's hobby developed further to the point where a local art gallery became interested in his work. *'Gradually I began to develop my artistic abilities, and the work brought me on and encouraged me to branch out from architecture'*, David explained, *'the medium I was using was fairly limiting and I found it a challenge to do my best with it.'*

Early in 1983, when he was approaching his mid forties, David found that his employers had acquired a **BBC Model B**. *'One lunchtime I wandered over to it and began to play with its graphics — I was immediately stimulated by the possibilities and realised there was something there for me. Before long I was fiddling round with the firm's machine most lunchtimes; then I decided to get my own computer. I bought a Spectrum and quite soon felt totally at home with it — I'd never looked at a computer before finding that BBC!'*



Photo Paul Francis

Later that year David went to see the **Open** at **Royal Birkdale**, and after looking at the course plan he came up with the idea of writing a golf simulation on his Spectrum . By early autumn the game was finished and he decided to try and sell it to a software company local to his home. He had **Ocean** and **Imagine** to choose between, and after being told to 'put it in the post to us' by Imagine, went for Ocean.

'I'll be the first to admit that I'm not a programmer, and I know that when you reviewed it you didn't exactly rave about it — but its still selling', David chuckled. Ocean's Dave Ward asked his new programmer to go away and come up with a loading screen for **Royal Birkdale**, while the rights to use the name of the Golf Course were being sorted out, and he was so impressed by the end result that Mr Thorpe was asked to do more loading screens for Ocean's games.

During 1984 David worked part-time designing loading screens for Ocean, and is the man behind the loading screens for **Decathalon, Raid Over Moscow, Conan, Zaxxon,** and **Up n'Down** to name but a few.

With a number of published loading screens behind him, David went to the PCW Show

and handed his card out to software companies producing games for the Spectrum. The response was good — and a fortnight later he had a call from Thames TV who asked him to submit a title animation for their new programme **4 Computer Buffs**. He didn't realise that it was really a competition at first, but set to work with Paul Owens, a programmer from Ocean who wrote the code to animate his graphics. If you happened to have been watching Channel 4 on 4th March this year you will have seen the end result!

By October last year, as the rush to complete games in time for the Christmas market bit home, software houses were beseiging David with work and he decided to take the plunge, give up his secure job and go freelance. He's not married and hasn't got children to support, so the decision to go freelance wasn't as hard as it could have been: *'I decided to jump in at the deep end'*, he said, *'and although I've started smoking again, I've thoroughly enjoyed working for myself. It was quite a step to take, starting a new career in my 40's, but I'm thoroughly enjoying it'.*

So how does he go about producing a loading screen? *'Generally I'm given some artwork to work from — I owe a lot to Bob Wakelin who does Ocean's cassette inlays — and then I set about translating the design onto the screen. Taking the original picture I draw it in pencil onto a printed grid of the Spectrum display area and then work from that using* ***Melbourne Draw****.*



'I can get an accurate picture of the screen that way, and then I usually have to juggle about with the picture to get a reasonable composition as the artwork is usually in a vertical format, while the screen I'm working with is horizontal. On ***Raid over Moscow*** *for instance I virtually had to re-draw the picture. My architectural training, which means I can do a genuine perspective drawing, helps immensely on such occasions.'*

While he is now working for six or seven software companies, all is not loading screens! David has begun to accept commissions for games screens and for animation sequences. Understandably, this aspect of his work is a bit hush-hush — games producers don't want details of their forthcoming software splashed around our **On the Cover feature** — but this is an area of work that David hopes to develop.

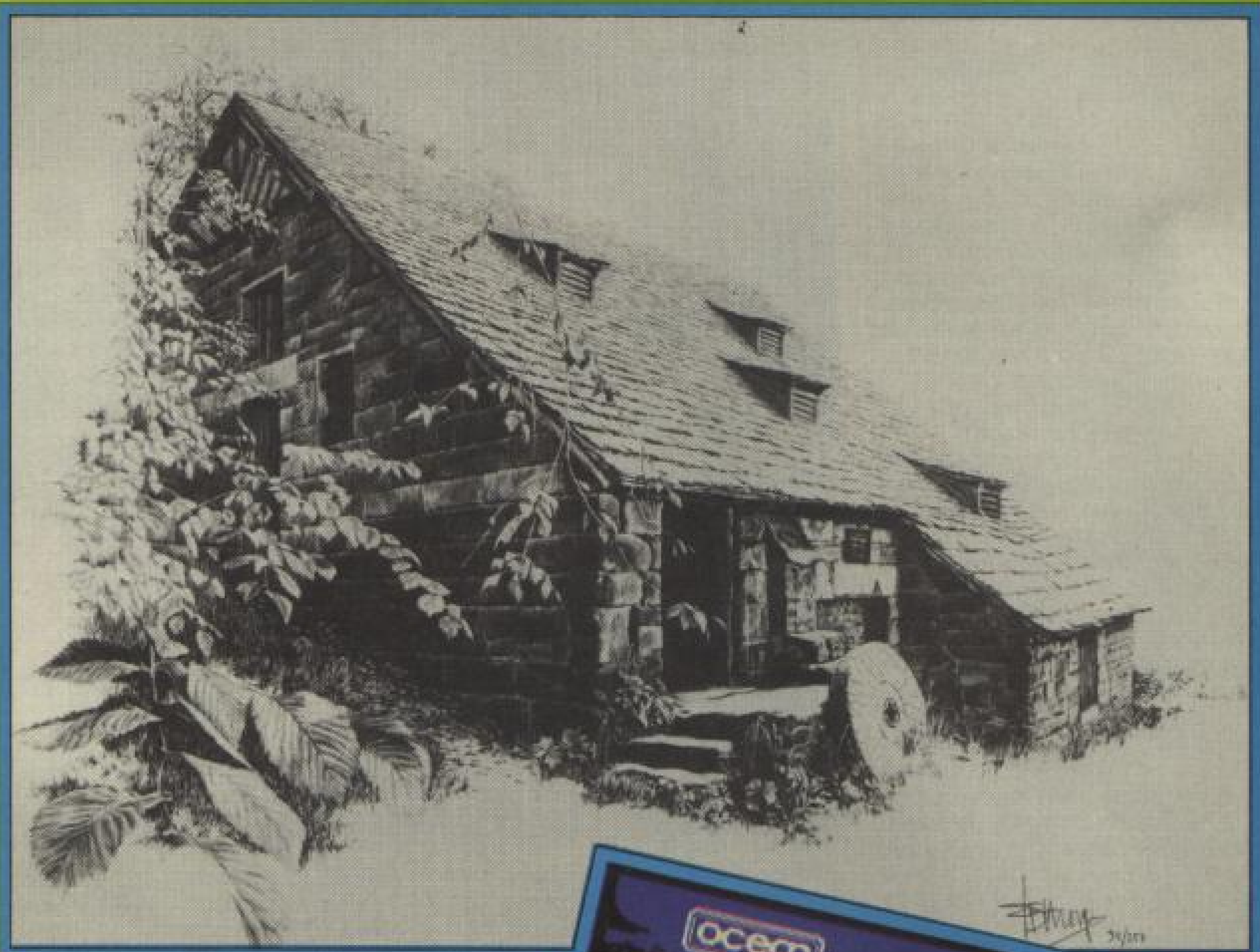


Working from a brief he designs characters as required and then works out a smooth animation sequence for them. *'If it's not a fantasy subject, I'll look at photos and drawings done from life and get a mental picture of my subject. Then I work out the details on paper, starting with one view and building up from there. The next stage is to refine the sequence on the screen'*, David explained.

Six months into his new career David is full of enthusiasm and has got to the point where the work is coming in at a rate where he is seriously thinking about employing someone to help him. *'I'm quietly confident now I've been going for six months: I've never had a piece of work rejected and still enjoy the challenge of doing my best with the possibilities offered by the Spectrum, which are fairly limiting. It is a challenge, but you can get a reasonable drawing out of the Spectrum. On the Commodore for instance the graphics tend to be chunky and zig-zags tend to crop up on curved lines.*

'It needs a lot of patience and a kind of discipline to produce loading screens, but both my architectural training and my background in architectural drawings have been a great help.

'I enjoy working as the artistic interface between people like Bob Wakelin and the computer screen, translating their work into the medium of computer memory — and animations and the problems of converting pictures for the screen allow me to incorporate my own ideas.



'Once I start a project I want to finish it as well as I can. I keep learning new techniques on the Spectrum and have recently started working with the Amstrad — I've found a new lease of life. It's terrific!'.

David Thorpe, Freelance Computer Graphics Artist, This is Your New Life . . . .






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